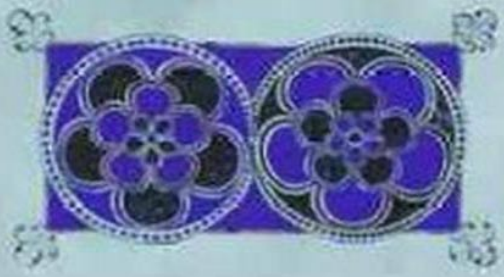

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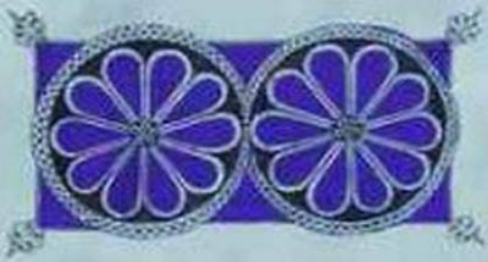

SHANE KIRKPATRICK

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by

Shane Kirkpatrick

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To
my biggest fan,
my greatest ally,
my best friend,
Andrea

CONTENTS

Figures xi
Preface xiii
Abbreviations xv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1

1 Introduction 1
2 Social-Scientific Criticism 4
2.1 On the Map of Biblical Interpretation 5
2.1.1 Three Paradigms of Biblical Interpretation 5
2.1.2 Divisions within Social-Scientific Criticism 8
2.1.3 Critique from the Historical Paradigm 8
2.1.4 Critique from the Literary Paradigm 12
2.1.5 Social-Scientific Reading 20
2.2 On the Map of the Social Sciences 23
2.2.1 Divisions within the Social Sciences 23
2.2.2 Paradigms for Cultural Anthropology 24
2.2.3 The Anthropology of Honor 25
3 A Social-Scientific Reading of Daniel 1–6 27
3.1 A Model of Honor 31
3.1.1 Definition of Honor 31
3.1.2 Sources of Honor 32
3.1.3 Achieving Honor 32
3.1.4 Envy 33
3.1.5 Replication of Honor 33
3.1.6 Symbols of Honor 33
3.1.7 Collective Honor 34
3.1.8 Honor-Related Social Institutions 34
3.2 Thesis and Prospectus 38

CHAPTER TWO: RESISTANCE: DANIEL 1 40

1 The Text 40
1.1 Daniel 1:1–7, 17–21 40
1.2 Daniel 1:8–16 42

2 The Model 43
2.1 For Reading Daniel 1:1–7, 17–21 43
2.2 For Reading Daniel 1:8–16 43
3 The Reading 46
3.1 Daniel 1:1–7 46
3.2 Daniel 1:8–16 55
3.2.1 Daniel and the Diviners 55
3.2.2 Explicit Comparison 59
3.2.3 Comparing More than Diets 60
3.3 Daniel 1:17–21 61
4 Summary 62

CHAPTER THREE: EXCELLENCE: DANIEL 2 67

1 The Text 67
1.1 Daniel 2:1–30, 46–49 67
1.2 Daniel 2:31–45 68
2 The Model 71
2.1 Challenge and Riposte 71
2.2 The Honor of Virtuous Deeds 73
3 The Reading 75
3.1 Daniel 2:1–13 75
3.2 Daniel 2:14–30 78
3.2.1 Daniel's Temperance 79
3.2.2 Daniel's Prudence 80
3.2.3 Daniel's Righteousness 80
3.2.4 Honor through Comparison 83
3.2.5 Honor through Excellence 85
3.3 Daniel 2:31–45 86
3.4 Daniel 2:46–49 88
4 Summary 90

CHAPTER FOUR: ENVY: DANIEL 3 AND 6 92

1 The Text 92
1.1 Daniel 3 92
1.2 Daniel 6 94
2 The Model 95
2.1 Envy 95
2.2 Labelling and Deviance Theory 98

3 The Reading 100
3.1 Daniel 3 100
3.2 Daniel 6 105
3.2.1 Envy and Honor 105
3.2.2 Labelling and Deviance 112
4 Summary 115

CHAPTER FIVE: SUCCESS AND FAILURE: DANIEL 4 AND 5 117

1 The Text 118
1.1 Daniel 4 118
1.2 Daniel 5 119
2 The Model 120
2.1 Review of the Dynamics of Honor 120
2.2 Three-zone Model of Human Personality 121
3 The Reading 123
3.1 Daniel 4 123
3.2 Daniel 5 129
4 Summary 137

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION 142

1 Review 142
1.1 The Value of a Social-Scientific Reading 142
1.2 Results of this Social-Scientific Reading 146
1.3 Contribution of this Social-Scientific Reading 155
2 Historical Transposition 160
3 Theological Reflection 167

Bibliography 174

Index of Subjects 187
Index of Authors 188
Index of Ancient Texts 191

FIGURES

Figure 1. Halliday's macro-functions (1973), adapted by Blount (1995) 21
Figure 2. Change of relationship indicated by change of name in Daniel 1 54
Figure 3. Judeans excel in comparison, by God's provision 62
Figure 4. Forms of an honor challenge (Malina 2001a) 72
Figure 5. Forms of response to a challenge (Bourdieu 1966; Malina 2001a) 72
Figure 6. Dialogue reveals Daniel's distinct source of revelation 86
Figure 7. Vocabulary of excellence in Daniel 2:31 87
Figure 8. Distinguishing "envy" from "jealousy" 96
Figure 9. Parallel accusations against the Judeans in Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 110
Figure 10. Chiastic structure in the book of Daniel 117
Figure 11. Three-zone model of human personality (Malina 2001a) 122

PREFACE

Although the tales in Daniel 1–6 have been studied extensively by biblical scholars using historical-critical and literary-critical methods, they have not had the benefit of sustained social-scientific analysis. By employing the methods and models of social-scientific criticism, a new reading of Daniel 1–6 adds constructively to the rich layers of exegesis produced by other methods. The primary model utilized here is the cultural model of honor developed by anthropologists of the circum-Mediterranean and corroborated by ancient rhetorical sources. Each of the tales is analyzed, revealing a comparison that is sustained throughout the compilation and that pits the Judean tradition in competition with a dominant foreign tradition. The dynamics of comparison and competition are explored in each tale with the help of social-scientific models depicting honor and exploring the related dynamics of purity, patronage, virtue, limited good, and envy.

In Daniel 1, the rejection of food is read as a rejection of the foreign education as well; the Judeans prove superior to their foreign counterparts not only in appearance but also in abilities, thus demonstrating the superiority of the Judean God's provisions over those of the foreign king. Daniel 2 again features the excellence of Daniel—who serves as a representative of the Judean tradition and who also explicitly cites the Judean God as his source of excellence—over the king's diviners, who represent the dominant foreign tradition. In Daniel 3 and 6, the foreign courtiers grow envious of the Judean success but fail in their own efforts to challenge the Judeans, who are vindicated by their God. Finally, Daniel 4 and 5 provide comparisons of not only Daniel with the foreign characters, but also one king (Nebuchadnezzar) with another (Belshazzar), as well as those two kings with God. Throughout, the comparisons favor the Judean tradition and thereby serve both to encourage and to model resistance to foreign domination, including that of the Seleucids during the second century BCE, which is the setting envisioned by this reading.

This reading began as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Notre Dame. My profound thanks go to the members of my committee—Eugene Ulrich (director), Jerome H. Neyrey (co-director), James C. VanderKam, and Hugh R. Page, Jr.—each of whom pro-

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I wish to express my thanks to Gary A. Anderson for providing me access to the English translation of Ephrem's *Hymns on Fasting* before its publication and to Randy G. Litchfield for providing me access to his work, "Rethinking Local Bible Study in a Postmodern Era," before its publication. Jill Branscum and the other librarians and staff of Anderson University's Nicholson Library deserve thanks for their indispensable efforts to provide me with access to all manner of published material. Material in Figure 5 taken from Bourdieu 1966 is used by permission of the University of Chicago Press. Material in Figures 4, 5, and 11 taken from *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* by Bruce J. Malina is used by permission of Westminster John Knox Press.

I am grateful to the editors of Brill's *Biblical Interpretation* series for their encouragement and support of this work. I am grateful, too, to the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion; through a grant funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., they gave me the opportunity to spend a summer revising this work and preparing it for publication.

To my immediate and extended family members, who have made countless sacrifices of time and attention, I can offer only my deepest gratitude and my sincere hope that this work will be deemed worthy of the effort.

My thanks go especially to my wife, Andrea, to whom this book is lovingly dedicated.

Shane Kirkpatrick
Anderson, IN
29 September 2004

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (text and translation from LCL)
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCE	Before the Common Era (= B.C., Before Christ)
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Oxford, 1907
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament. Edited by M. Noth and H. W. Wolff
BSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ca.	circa
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CE	Common Era (= A.D., *anno Domini*, "the year of our Lord")
CEV	Contemporary English Version
cf.	*confer*, compare
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. Edited by I. B. Chabot et al. Paris, 1903–
CWS	Classics of Western Spirituality. New York, 1978–
diss.	dissertation
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
Eng.	English (refers to the verse numbering in most English translations)
esp.	especially
EvJ	*Evangelical Journal*
FC	Fathers of the Church. Washington, D.C., 1947–
FIOTL	Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
Garr.	Plutarch, *De garrulitate* (text and translation from LCL)
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship

HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994–2000
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
Hist.	Herodotus, *Histories* (text and translation from LCL)
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
i.e.	*id est*, that is
Ieiun.	Ephrem, *Hymns on Fasting* (*de ieiunio*) (text from Beck 1964; translation from Anderson, Griffith, and Young forthcoming)
Int	*Interpretation*
Inv. od.	Plutarch, *De invidia et odio* (text and translation from LCL)
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism: Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
J.W.	Josephus, *Jewish War* (text and translation from LCL)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Life	Josephus, *The Life* (text and translation from LCL)
lit.	literally
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by Leander Keck. 12 vols. Nashville, 1994–2002
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRTh	*La nouvelle revue théologique*
ms.	manuscript
MT	Masoretic Text
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OCD	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth. 3d ed. Oxford, 1996

OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*. Edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. 20 vols. 2d ed. Oxford, 1989
OG	Old Greek
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
RB	*Revue biblique*
rev.	revised (by)
Rhet.	Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (translation from G. Kennedy 1991)
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SS	Scriptores Syri
StABH	Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics
Th	Theodotion
T. Sim.	*Testament of Simeon* (text and translation from *OTP*)
TSK	*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*
Tusc.	Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* (text and translation from LCL)
Virt. vit.	Aristotle, *Virtues and Vices* (text and translation from LCL)
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WBComp	Westminster Bible Companion

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1 *Introduction*

The anthropologist Laura Bohannan (1966) provides an illuminating—and amusing—anecdote that illustrates what can happen to a text's "meaning" in a cross-cultural encounter. Literary theorists call it "recontextualization" (Malina and Pilch 2000:21), and an example of it is found also in the children's book series, *Minerva Louise* (e.g., Stoeke 1996). Minerva Louise is a chicken who wanders from her accustomed surroundings on the farm and interprets what she finds elsewhere according to her understandings of farm life. For example, she explores the children's cubbies in an elementary school and decides that they are designed for nesting. In one of the cubbies is a baseball resting in a catcher's mitt, and to Minerva Louise this is obviously an egg in a nest. This construction of meaning (what Adam calls "making sense" [1995a:169–81]) from one's own context is an unavoidable component in understanding what we see or hear or read (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966; Berger 1967). In most cases, we do not stray far from our familiar and accustomed surroundings, and so the things we see or hear or read participate in the same cultural context with us and are adequately understood in those familiar terms.

In Bohannan's case, however, her attempt to share the Shakespearean story of *Hamlet* with the Tiv people of West Africa demonstrates the vast difference that can become apparent between "our" understanding of a text and an understanding of that same text produced by hearers/readers who interpret it according to their own familiar and accustomed cultural context. "Human nature is pretty much the same the whole world over," thought Bohannan. "At least the general plot and motivation of the greater tragedies would always be clear—everywhere—although some details of custom might have to be explained and difficulties of translation might produce other slight changes" (1966:28). When she is invited to tell a story one morning, she takes the opportunity to test her claim for the universal intelligibility of *Hamlet*.

> I began in the proper style, "Not yesterday, not yesterday, but long ago, a thing occurred. One night three men were keeping watch outside the homestead of the great chief, when suddenly they saw the former chief approach them."
>
> "Why was he no longer their chief?"
>
> "He was dead," I explained. "That is why they were troubled and afraid when they saw him."
>
> "Impossible," began one of the elders, handing his pipe on to his neighbor, who interrupted, "Of course it wasn't the dead chief. It was an omen sent by a witch. Go on."
>
> Slightly shaken, I continued. (1966:29)

Indeed, Bohannan continued, but with incessant interruptions and "corrections" to her story from the elders and other listeners. Bohannan's being "shaken" turned into being "upset" and "thrown off balance," "perplexed" and "cross." Her Tiv audience was involved in a process of making the story sensible and coherent to themselves by drawing connections to their own worldview. When describing Hamlet's killing of Polonius, Bohannan says,

> "[Hamlet] thought it was the chief and wished to kill him to avenge his father. He had meant to kill him earlier that evening." . . . . This time, I had shocked my audience seriously. "For a man to raise his hand against his father's brother and the one who has become his father—that is a terrible thing. The elders ought to let such a man be bewitched."
>
> I nibbled at my kola nut in some perplexity, then pointed out that after all the man had killed Hamlet's father.
>
> "No," pronounced the old man, speaking less to me than to the young men sitting behind the elders. "If your father's brother has killed your father, you must appeal to your father's age mates; *they* may avenge him. No man may use violence against his senior relatives." Another thought struck him. "But if his father's brother had indeed been wicked enough to bewitch Hamlet and make him mad, that would be a good story indeed, for it would be his fault that Hamlet, being mad, no longer had any sense and thus was ready to kill his father's brother."
>
> There was a murmur of applause. *Hamlet* was again a good story to them, but it no longer seemed quite the same story to me. (1966:32)

With that scenario in mind, consider the task of reading and interpreting the Bible. Like Shakespeare to the Tiv, the biblical texts are foreign documents to us, having been constructed and preserved and transmitted by peoples whose cultural context is distinct from our own in the contemporary Western world. Unlike Bohannan and her Tiv audience, however, we do not have the advantage of immediate con-

tact and interpersonal communication to become aware of and sort through these cultural differences. Without an awareness of them, readers of the Bible tend to "fill in the gaps" with cultural information from their own context and render the biblical stories sensible and coherent to themselves. This approach undoubtedly makes the biblical material into "a good story to them," but it just as surely leaves the texts "no longer . . . quite the same."

The book of Daniel has suffered no shortage of modern interpretations, but one wonders if they render a reading of Daniel that would "no longer seem quite the same" to an ancient reader of Daniel. That possibility—rendered plausible by our own experiences of cross-cultural encounter—is what gives rise to this present study, a social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6. How might ancient readers have understood the tales found in the first six chapters of Daniel? What is there in a different cultural context that would affect an interpretation of these tales? The scenario envisioned in this study is that of second-century BCE Judean readers. The differences in cultural context that are proposed for those ancient readers include an honor-shame society and a variety of components that stem from that central cultural value. The conclusion is that a reading produced by attending to these ancient cultural cues will be in many ways distinct from modern readings of the material, and that that distinction is valuable in a number of different ways.

Specifically, this present social-scientific reading suggests that second-century BCE Judean readers could have found in Daniel 1–6 a collection of tales which served as a literature of resistance to the perceived threat of Hellenistic cultural hegemony. These tales resisted Hellenism by sustaining a comparison between Judean tradition and Hellenistic tradition, depicted by means of the similar clash of cultures during the period of the Babylonian exile. This sustained comparison clearly favors the Judean tradition over the foreign one and suggests that the Babylonian (read: Hellenistic) tradition has been weighed and found wanting (cf. Dan 5:27). Indeed, it serves to articulate its advantages not only for the Judeans but for their oppressors as well, thereby providing encouragement for the loyalty of Judeans to their tradition, and specifically to their relationship to the God of their ancestors.

The attempt to render an interpretation of a text *as that text might have been understood by someone else* is indeed an endeavor fraught with difficulties and challenges. Interestingly, it is the contemporary influence

of postmodern thought that both problematizes this endeavor and enables it. On the one hand, how can anyone claim to know and propose to report how someone else made sense of a text? On the other hand, since *no one can* establish with certainty how someone else made sense of a text, there is a certain freedom to imagine possibilities and explore probabilities—the fruits of which may be found to be valuable for reasons other than their "accuracy" (which cannot be verified or falsified anyway). But perhaps I am drawing my conclusions before I have made my argument. What is there about the present state of biblical scholarship that provides for the endeavor envisioned here?

2 *Social-Scientific Criticism*

Biblical scholars are increasingly aware that "there are no neutral methods of biblical interpretation. Readers of the Bible rarely operate with an explicitly formulated theory of the text. Yet theoretical assumptions are undeniably present" (Holladay 1994:125). It has become a desideratum among biblical scholars that critical attention be given as much to the theoretical assumptions underlying a reading as to the reading itself (cf. Bultmann 1984). This call is sounded as a result of postmodern thought generally (see Adam 1995b; Hens-Piazza 2002:44–49), and it is given a specifically clear articulation by social-scientific critics (e.g., Elliott 1993, who also answers the call by enumerating ten presuppositions operative in the social-scientific method [1993:36–59]).

A review of the accumulated results of critical scholarship on the book of Daniel is not necessary at this point. Recent and influential commentaries will be engaged below as this social-scientific reading unfolds. The literature on Daniel is extensive, even to the point of being overwhelming (see the more than five hundred pages of listings in the annotated bibliography prepared by Thompson [1993]), and reflects a very wide range of interests, concerns, approaches, perspectives, strategies, and conclusions. Reviews of scholarship are available in very comprehensive form in the commentaries of John Goldingay (1989) and John Collins (1993). Further, two volumes on *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* are available in the "Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature" series (Collins and Flint 2001). What requires our attention here instead is

a review of the rationale for yet another reading of Daniel 1–6 and the place of its social-scientific methodology in the broader field of biblical interpretation.

If the variety of critical approaches and subdisciplines operative in the contemporary interpretive scene are considered on the analogy of a landscape, then a map becomes an appropriate and helpful tool (though it remains, of course, a construct) for locating a particular interpretive enterprise on that landscape. Dividing the landscape into quadrants or sectors allows for a location to be specified by designating one area and not others. Social-scientific criticism, being an interdisciplinary endeavor, requires placement not only in the landscape of biblical interpretation but in the landscape of the social sciences as well.

2.1 *On the Map of Biblical Interpretation*

2.1.1 *Three Paradigms of Biblical Interpretation*

Carl Holladay is not alone in dividing the field of biblical interpretation into three sectors, each of which designates an interpretive "paradigm" (the term is used by Holladay [1994:125–26] as well as by Gottwald [1985:6–34]). Holladay's labels for the three are: "the divine oracle paradigm" (1994:126–28), "the historical paradigm" (1994: 128–36), and "the literary paradigm" (1994:136–47). Norman Gottwald names them: "the confessional religious approach" (1985:8–10), "the historical-critical approach" (1985:10–16), and "new literary and social science approaches" (1985:20–31). As their names indicate, each is a general orientation under which may be clustered a number of different specific methods. Thus, the divine oracle paradigm or confessional religious approach includes the early church's and medieval period's methods of typology, allegory, and others. The historical paradigm or historical-critical approach includes textual criticism, source criticism, form criticism, and others. The literary paradigm or new literary (and social science) approaches include rhetorical criticism, structuralism, and others. The three classifications also follow the historical development of biblical interpretation; that is, the confessional paradigm is the oldest and has held the field for the longest period of time, from at least the first or second century CE (Gottwald 1985:9) and perhaps as early as the "exilic and post-exilic periods of Israelite history" (Holladay 1994:127). The historical paradigm arose during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and has been

dominant among scholars through the modern period. The literary paradigm is the most recent addition and, though it has made significant contributions and has clearly carved a permanent niche for itself in the landscape, it cannot be said to have displaced the historical paradigm. Indeed, each of the three clusters of approaches continues to be practiced widely by various interpretive communities, and there is no small degree of overlap and interrelation between the paradigms and their individual methods, as is evident in the case of social-scientific criticism.

Social-scientific criticism is a unique blending of interdisciplinary emphases that renders it difficult to categorize. Gottwald sometimes treats it as a fourth, distinct paradigm in its own right. For example, he speaks of "the social science paradigm" alongside "the historical-critical and religious paradigms" and "the literary paradigm" (1985:33, cf. 22). He also, however, discusses the common ground shared by literary criticism and social-scientific criticism (1985:29–31). In contrast, Holladay places "social history and sociological analysis" within the sector of the historical paradigm (1994:135–36). "This approach to biblical literature is included here as part of the historical paradigm because," he correctly notes, "it essentially reads and uses biblical texts as sources for doing social-historical reconstruction or sociological analysis" (1994:136). There is undeniably an historical concern that provides the impetus for social-scientific criticism.

At the same time, Holladay also correctly discerns that social-scientific criticism has posed challenges to the historical paradigm (1994:136); Gottwald writes of the former's "frustration" (1985:29) or "grievance with older methods of biblical inquiry" (1985:30). Gottwald describes this as a motivation shared with literary criticism (1985:29–31). One of social-scientific criticism's nearest neighbors (if not kin) is rhetorical criticism, which is one of the methods of the literary paradigm. Holladay again perceives the difficulty of locating a method squarely in only one or another of the sectors on the map when he discusses rhetorical criticism (1994:140). Because of its attention to the original historical context of a text and its rhetorical features, rhetorical criticism shares much with the methods of the historical paradigm. "Yet rhetorical criticism is included under the literary paradigm because the rhetoric of a text is essentially part of its literary texture" (1994:140).

The best extended introduction to social-scientific criticism, John Elliott's aptly-titled volume *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (1993),

likewise identifies this rich mix of influences from both the historical and literary approaches. Like literary approaches, social-scientific criticism "focuses primarily on biblical texts." "Yet," continues Elliott, "it is also closely related to other disciplines with a broader focus not on specific texts but on ancient social and cultural systems in general as investigated by historians" and others (1993:8). In his definition of social-scientific criticism, Elliott explicitly ties it to the historical paradigm while at the same time describing it in terms familiar to the literary paradigm: "As a component of the historical-critical method of exegesis, social-scientific criticism investigates biblical texts as meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate between composers and audiences" (1993:7). On the one hand, Elliott stresses that social-scientific criticism contributes to the historical-critical goal of understanding a text *within its original context* (1993:1–2, 9, 50, 69, 101–02; see below, 2.1.4). On the other hand, the purpose of this attention to the historical context is to better understand the text *as a text*, as a vehicle of communication (1993:7, 10–11, 67, 69–70, 101).

The relationship of social-scientific criticism to the literary paradigm is evident in the former's close relationship to rhetorical criticism. Holladay, describing rhetorical criticism and its place in the literary paradigm, suggests that "if the literary paradigm conceives of what is said in the text as the voice of the text, rhetorical criticism seeks to identify the distinctive elements of that voice, its patterns of vocal expression, and how they are arranged in order to convey the message of the text" (1994:140). Elliott describes social-scientific criticism similarly. He suggests that its understanding of "the features of a text as an instrument of communication" includes

> a specifically textual mode of organizing the preceding elements [i.e., the text's expression of perceptions, ideas, beliefs, self-interests, etc.] (syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically) as a coherent, aesthetic, and persuasive discourse related to a particular situation and designed to have a specific effect (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) upon its intended readers. (1993:53, cf. 7, 54, 74–75)

In other words, both rhetorical criticism and social-scientific criticism seek to understand *how* a text works to communicate. Both Elliott (1990:xxxi, 10–11, 19) and Vernon Robbins (1992:xxx–xxxi; 1995; 1996:71–94), a practitioner of "socio-rhetorical criticism," have noted the extensive "overlap" (Elliott 1993:54) or "convergence" (Elliott 1993:100) that exists and is to be encouraged between the two methods.

2.1.2 *Divisions within Social-Scientific Criticism*

The convergence between these two methods is emphasized here not only to demonstrate social-scientific criticism's participation in both the historical and literary paradigms but also to lay the groundwork for the particular form of social-scientific criticism utilized in this reading of Daniel 1–6. Just as the field of biblical interpretation can be divided into distinct, if overlapping, sectors, so too the ground covered by social-scientific criticism can itself be further divided. Elliott identifies a significant distinction among the varieties of "social" study between, on the one hand, work that is strictly descriptive and, on the other hand, work that employs social theory and models for the express purpose of social-scientific explanation (1993:20; cf. Osiek 1992:4–6). Those two camps can likewise be subdivided into five smaller categories: (1) social description, (2) social history, (3) study of social organization with the deliberate use of social theory and models, (4) study of social and cultural scripts with the deliberate use of social theory and models, especially those of cultural anthropology, and (5) analysis of biblical texts (1993:18–20; cf. Gottwald 1985:26–29). As Elliott cautions, these divisions are not to be considered mutually exclusive but complementary. For example, social-scientific analysis depends upon the results of the descriptive task (1993:20). Likewise, the analysis of biblical texts is frequently indebted, as is this reading of Daniel 1–6, to the anthropological studies of social and cultural scripts (defined, briefly, as "the prescribed patterns and processes for 'playing the game of life' within a given cultural system" [Elliott 1993:128]).

2.1.3 *Critique from the Historical Paradigm*

The analysis of a biblical text cannot easily proceed directly from the employment of an anthropological model, however. Indeed, one of the recurring critiques of social-scientific criticism is the potential incommensurability of ancient and modern societies and of the models constructed on the basis of the latter to analyze the former (Elliott 1993:97–98). Thus, for example, the case must be made that the model of honor which has developed on the basis of anthropological research in the modern circum-Mediterranean (Peristiany 1966; Pitt-Rivers 1977; Gilmore 1982 and 1987; Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992) is applicable also to the ancient circum-Mediterranean (Neyrey calls this "the nagging historical question" [1998c:8]). On the one hand, one presupposition of social-scientific criticism insists that the

most appropriate models for use in the analysis of the Bible and its environment are those constructed on the basis of research and data pertaining to the geographical, social, and cultural region inhabited by the biblical communities (Elliott 1993:49; see Malina 1991a:256–60). On the other hand, however, a "limiting factor" which hinders this endeavor is the restricted availability and fragmentary nature of information from societies and cultures either contemporary and contiguous with the biblical communities or similar in social and cultural situation but removed in terms of time and space (Elliott 1993:92–93). How is the ancient culture, unavailable for observation by the modern ethnographer, to be studied to determine its characteristics?

For many interpreters, the missing link is discovered in the study of rhetoric. A correspondence between the content of the ancient culture's rhetoric and the contours of the modern model argue for the appropriateness and applicability of the modern model to the ancient culture (cf. the significant issues raised by The Bible and Culture Collective [1995:149–86] and addressed further below, 2.1.4). For example, one of the dominant models used in social-scientific criticism, and the one employed in this reading of Daniel 1–6, is the model of honor as a central value of the ancient world (Malina 2001a:27–57; Malina and Neyrey 1991c; Neyrey 1998c:14–34; cf. Moxnes 1996; Esler 1994:19–36; Rohrbaugh 1995; Stansell 1994; Plevnik 1998; Jewett 2003). The question whether and to what extent the ancient circum-Mediterranean shared cultural traits with the modern circum-Mediterranean societies studied by anthropologists finds its answer in the studies done by classicists and historians (e.g., Adkins 1960; see Moxnes 1996:33–36) as well as biblical scholars familiar with ancient rhetoric.

For example, much of the work of Jerome Neyrey is built upon comparing the dynamics presented in biblical texts not only to the dynamics described by anthropologists but also to those reflected upon by ancient rhetoricians. Thus, before a claim is made that a biblical passage reflects the cultural value of honor, that cultural value is first explored by means of modern anthropological models and then anchored in the ancient context by comparative study of the Bible's rhetoric with contemporary ancient rhetoric. This double-comparative procedure is well demonstrated in Neyrey's extensive study of *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (1998c). A section on "Honor and Shame in Cultural Perspective" (1998c:14–34) first establishes the tie between the categories of honor identified by

modern anthropologists ("etic" perspective; see Elliott 1993:38–39) and the rhetoric of honor employed by ancient rhetoricians and authors ("emic" perspective). To provide but one broad example, the purpose of epideictic rhetoric, one of three species of rhetoric, is to praise or blame, according to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1.3, 1.9). Honor and shame are invoked as the grounds for the praise or blame, indicating that the cultural values of honor and shame were of central significance in the world reflected in and shaped by Aristotle and his rhetorical heirs (Neyrey 1998c:8–9). Only then does Neyrey move to a section on "Reading Matthew in Cultural Perspective" (1998c:35–68), which examines the Gospel under a lens shaped by the anthropological model of honor and shame but corroborated and brought into focus by the study of ancient rhetoric.

David deSilva (1995 and 1999) similarly grounds honor discourse in the conventions of ancient rhetoric, though his work has been criticized by social-scientific biblical scholars for its lack of explicit attention to social-scientific models (Malina 1997; Rohrbaugh 2000). In other words, deSilva engages in a comparative analysis of the culture's rhetoric and the Bible's rhetoric, but he lacks the comparative analysis of that "emic" rhetoric with the "etic" models that make sense of it for a modern audience. Thus, *the analysis of a biblical text cannot proceed directly from the application of a modern anthropological model, but neither can the analysis fruitfully proceed from simply the application of ancient rhetorical parallels*. In his strongly-worded review of deSilva's work, Bruce Malina insists that

> the belief that a citation of a passage from the ancient world is self-explanatory is a delusion as long as the social system within which the passage makes sense is not available to the modern scholar (reader). . . . Thus high-context parallels chosen to illustrate high-context documents are as opaque as the document to be interpreted. (1997:378)

The modifier, "high-context," captures the importance of rhetoric as the crucial link between the modern model and the ancient culture. In high-context social system, as described by Edward Hall (1976:91–101), communication can proceed on the presumption of "a broadly shared, well-understood knowledge of the context of anything referred to in conversation or in writing" (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:11 and 1998:16–18; Malina 1996c:24–25). Documents in a high-context society, therefore, tend to be sketchy and impressionistic, leaving much unsaid. Because the reader is able to provide what

is missing on the basis of the shared social institutions and cultural cues, the documents do not need to explain details extensively. In contrast, documents in the modern Western world tend to be highly specific and detailed (think, for example, of a legal contract), for they operate in a low-context society, where extensive information is required to ensure adequate understanding (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:11–12 and 1998:16–18; Malina 1991b:19–20). In the absence of the shared social and cultural (high-)context of the ancient world, modern interpreters rely upon emic information which is garnered not only from the ancient texts themselves (the Bible, where the rhetoric is put to use) but also from their contextual counterparts (ancient rhetorical handbooks, where the rhetoric is "conceptualized" [G. Kennedy 1984:10–11] and its use is explained) and then organized into etic categories by modern anthropological models.

This operation is called "recontextualization" (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:12–13 and 1998:18–19), and it requires the explicit and critical use of theories and models in order to be available to criticism and review by the interpreter and other critics (see Elliott 1993:95). When they do not rely on explicit models to provide the necessary information for understanding high-context documents, interpreters—like the chicken, Minerva Louise—rely on implicit models, based not on critical anthropological and rhetorical/historical work but on impressions and intuitive hunches from their own experiences in their own social and cultural contexts, to recontextualize biblical narratives (Elliott 1993:12, 42, 91). The result is readings that suffer from anachronism and ethnocentrism (Elliott 1993:11). Anachronism, "assuming that another society remote in time from us shares our culture and perspectives" (Esler 1994:22), and ethnocentrism, "assuming the values of another society are the same as ours" (Esler 1994:22; cf. Malina 1991b:8–9), are immediately—and sometimes humorously—obvious when a text from a familiar Western context is read in a temporally and culturally distinct context. This is the insight documented by Bohannan, who "was quite sure that *Hamlet* had only one possible interpretation, and that one universally obvious" (1966:28). She quickly learned the error of her assumption, however, as the elders questioned and reinterpreted virtually every key element of the story, basing their interpretation on the anachronistic and ethnocentric assumption that "people are the same everywhere; therefore," for example, "there are always witches and it is we, the elders, who know how witches work" (1966:33). The tribal elders consistently

used *their own* cultural context to interpret a text that came from a *different* cultural context. Though it is obvious to *us* when *they* do that to *our* texts, we are often blind to the same anachronistic and ethnocentric assumption operative in *our own* readings when *we* do that to *their* texts (see Malina 2001a:7–17).

Numerous resources are now available to biblical scholars to help delineate the cultural differences between the modern industrial Western world and the ancient agrarian world of the Bible (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:1–8; Malina and Neyrey 1988:145–51 and 1996:225–31; Malina 1989, 1993 and 2001a; Matthews 1991; Matthews and Benjamin 1993; Pilch 1991a:75–76, 95–116 and 2000:3–13; Pilch and Malina 1998; see others listed in Elliott 1993:40). While some attention must be given to local and temporal variation, the "utter conventionality" (Neyrey 1998c:9) of the culture as conceptualized in ancient rhetoric works in the modern interpreter's favor. In high-context social systems, "people have been socialized within a narrow range of widely shared and rather unchanging social institutions and cultural cues" (Malina 1997:378). The limited scope and broadly unchanging character of these cultural cues significantly enhances the applicability of a fairly abstract model to a wide range of specific circumstances (see below, Chapter Six, 1.1).

2.1.4 *Critique from the Literary Paradigm*

The social-scientific approach has faced criticism not only from those with historical-critical concerns but also from those with postmodern concerns. Consideration of two recent examples provides an opportunity both to weigh these concerns and to reflect further on the nature of the social-scientific task. Fred Burnett has questioned the social-scientific critic's ability to make claims about "what was 'really there' " (1993:365). Indeed, strong claims about the reality of social-scientific critics' reconstructions of social and cultural systems do appear to participate in a form of modernist positivism, and the stated desire to recover the *original* cultural context of the Bible seems to ignore the shadow of doubt that postmodern thought has cast over such an endeavor (see Adam 1995b:20–21). Fernando Segovia uses the label "modernist" (2000:370) like a warrant for the arrest of the social-scientific approach. With this charge of modernism, Segovia attempts to indict social-scientific criticism of inadequacy through guilt by association with modernity.

One of the concerns that postmodern biblical critics raise in gen-

eral is with the ethical implications of modern biblical study (see Burnett 1990 and 2000:112). Daniel Patte (1995:42) and Segovia (1995:13, 19, 26–27) both cast their concern in terms of pedagogical practice. They ask, in essence, whether it is oppressive (and thus unethical) for biblical scholars to claim to have the best reading (or the best discourse in which to produce readings) of the biblical text and thereby to set themselves up as the "experts" to whom all "novices" must come (and pay!) for training in "proper" biblical interpretation. Though I share that concern, I think it is well-answered (if abrasively so) by Malina (1996a). One of Malina's counter-questions is quite telling. "What other university course of studies would allow that each individual's private interpretation of the subject matter is equally valid to that of professional scholars?" (1996a:83). What I think this articulation points up is a distinction of discourses that is seldom accounted for.

I think there are two important issues here and that attention to the distinction of discourses can help address them both. By "discourse" I mean "both the verbal and non-verbal practices by which a profession conducts itself. . . . [A] discourse defines what its object of study is *and* what counts as knowledge about it" (Burnett 2000:108 and, more fully, 1990:65–66). The distinction I wish to draw is between academic biblical interpretation and ecclesiastic biblical interpretation as two distinct discourses (alongside which there are many others as well). One of the important issues to be addressed is the ontological and epistemological question of what can be known about ancient cultures and other elements of historical contexts and what that in turn allows us to know about the best reading or interpretation of a biblical text. Along these lines, consider the contrast drawn by The Bible and Culture Collective between different ways to conceive of a text's function. Shall we say that a text has the capacity to "refer its readers to a complex order of moral, emotional, and psychological realities" (quoted from Robert Alter) or rather the capacity to "conjure up for its readers" a complex order of moral, emotional, and psychological "possibilities" instead (1995:166)? The other important issue is the ethical question of what authority any given interpretation has or what power it wields.

With regard to the first issue, academic interpretation of the modernist variety has had a tendency at times to claim epistemological superiority for itself on the basis of the ontological advantage of its readings, couched in the claim that they reveal what the text "really

says" (just as ecclesiastic interpretation has made similar claims at times as well). But there are several different possible responses (more even than are listed here) to the recognition of interpretive diversity. One is to claim that one reading must be *the* right one while all others are, by definition, wrong. Another is to claim that there is one right reading, but that none of those currently offered captures it precisely. Yet another response is to suppose that there *may be* one right reading, but that we have no universally-held criteria by which to know if it were ever articulated because all readings are evaluated on criteria that are held, self-referentially, within any one or another discourse. A fourth response is to conclude that there is no one right reading that exists outside the diversity of particular and discourse-specific readings we now have or ever will produce. The difference in these responses is significant, and, arguably, that significance is borne out with regard to the second issue.

The differences in authority and power, measured in terms of the real material effects of these different readings or interpretations, raises ethical concerns alongside (though, in one sense, quite apart from) any ontological or epistemological concerns. And here again the distinction between discourses is helpful in drawing our attention to what is at stake and how we may move forward. In brief, my contention is that social-scientific criticism can make certain kinds of claims within academic discourse that need not translate into oppressive measures within ecclesiastic discourse.

Speaking epistemologically, postmodern criticism has pointed out that academic biblical interpretation has no firmer claim to articulating the best reading than any other biblical interpretation does, partly because the criteria for "best" are self-referential within the discourse and not held in common universally. As A. K. M. Adam puts it, "the historian's version of a biblical text has no inherently greater claim to authority than does any other version" (1995b:35). Notice that the "claim to authority" moves us away from the epistemological and toward the ethical question. Adam then continues with an important insight.

> This does not, of course, mean that all versions are equal; they all differ. . . . We are now free to, and obliged to, recognize that our Grandma may produce a sounder interpretation of a psalm than does a Reverend Professor. If she wants to make a claim about the historical likelihood of one or another event, we will probably assay her claim with help from those who have immersed their lives in judging such claims. (1995b:35–36)

That final sentence points to the discourse known as academic biblical interpretation, a discourse that has been traditionally and remains presently historical-critical in nature. Even under postmodern influence, it retains its historical-critical orientation; the difference is that "postmodern historians are saying . . . that a historical narrative in both its form and content is not a re-construction of the 'past itself' but is a con-struct that refers to the fictive discourse of other historians" (Burnett 2000:110). So, if our Grandma or if any other biblical interpreter wishes to make an interpretation that involves questions of history, then academic (historical-critical) biblical scholarship is the discourse in which to make such an interpretation. Other interpretations may find their home in other discourses, and the one does not invalidate the others (note, however, that the ideological and material *effects* of various interpretations are very different and can be significantly more or less powerful than others). All biblical interpreters do not need to sit at the feet of an academic master in order to be biblical interpreters—but they do need to be enculturated into academic discourse *if they wish to participate in academic discourse*, and the traditional pedagogical structure of teacher-and-student(s) is, at present, how that discourse incorporates new participants.

Where does social-scientific criticism fit in all this? I believe it can make a distinctive contribution in each of the two discourses, academic and ecclesiastic. And in both cases, a claim for its position on the field can be made in full concert with the concerns of postmodern critics. Within the realm of academic biblical interpretation, the case is well made by Malina (e.g., 1986b), Elliott (1993), Ferdinand Deist (2000:23–77) and others that "acquaintance with a text's cultural world is indispensable for successful communication between text and reader, for validating exegetical hypotheses and for creating a critical self-awareness in the exegete" (Deist 2000:102). This claim to be "indispensable" is, I contend, a claim that is made in and directed toward the discourse of academic biblical interpretation. Such an "apology" for social-scientific criticism, which as yet is still a necessary accompaniment for each new contribution to this growing body of interpretation, intends to broaden the historical-critical discourse of academic biblical interpretation to include not only philological, grammatical, and other strictly linguistic and semantic concerns (Deist 2000:24–28) but also a concern for the role of *cultural* information in communication. In fact, as postmodern critics have demonstrated the indeterminacy of purely linguistic expression,

social-scientific critics have fully concurred; sense is not made of *words* but of *wordings* (i.e., patterns of written squiggles or oral/aural "patterned soundings" [Malina 1996c:3–14]) serving as *signs* within a *shared cultural context* (i.e., a "symbolic universe" [Neyrey 1991b] or "cognitive world" [Deist 2000:29–33]). How do wordings communicate anything except by participating in a society's "narrow range of widely shared and rather unchanging social institutions and cultural cues" (Malina 1997:378; cf. Deist 2000:21)?

Thus, social-scientific critics *do* wish to add to the body of material that an aspiring *academic* biblical interpreter must master in order to practice the craft well. But note that this new requirement is not intended to be "oppressive" but is itself couched in terms of a fundamental *ethical* concern. The analogy of cross-cultural travel is helpful here, as we have had illustrated already by Bohannan (1966). Elliott reproduces a "Code of Ethics for Travelers" from the Center for Responsible Tourism based in San Anselmo, California. Included in that Code is the injunction to "get acquainted with local customs; respect them" (Elliott 1993:59). Social-scientific criticism is designed to help interpreters become respectful visitors and intelligent listeners and perceptive readers in their encounter with the "unfamiliar turf of the Bible" (Elliott 1993:59). Ethnocentrism and anachronism are to be avoided. "To take the words of another without any attempt to understand them in terms of what the other meant or means in the other's original context (of situation and social system) is to twist the words of that other. This I believe is unethical and immoral," declares Malina (1996a:84) in response to Patte's call for *Ethics* (1995) in biblical interpretation.

There is a repeated call for "considerate" readers in the series of "social-science commentaries" on the Synoptic Gospels (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:8–15), John (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998:16–19), and Revelation (Malina and Pilch 2000:19–22).

> When it comes to documents from the past, it is at the reading end that one can assess a reader's fairness or considerateness toward the authors or ancient recipients of those documents—not at the writing end. In other words, it is impossible for ancient Mediterranean authors, even biblical ones, to be considerate writers relative to readers in the twentieth century. It is twentieth-century readers who must learn to be considerate readers by learning scenarios of ancient Mediterranean social systems. (Malina 1996a:84)

In good postmodern fashion, it is to be readily admitted that each of the "scenarios" that make up the social-scientific critic's toolkit is of course only a "con-struct" (Burnett 2000:110) and not a reconstruction of what was "really there" (Burnett 1993:365; Malina explicitly denies ontological status to the models [1991a:265–66]), but such an admission does not preclude their use as a valuable and important—even indispensable—component of academic biblical interpretation (Deist 2000:23–58, 102). As long as academic biblical interpretation continues as a historical-critical discourse, then critical attention is due, as an ethical responsibility, to the historical *cultural* context of the Bible.

On the other hand, within the realm of ecclesiastic biblical interpretation, we would do well to heed the concerns of postmodern critics. But note that now we are operating not within a single discourse but in the delicate balance of relations between discourses. While it is appropriate—indeed, an ethically positive virtue—to call for "students" to "learn" cultural models and scenarios in order to interpret biblical texts within the historical-critical discourse of academic biblical interpretation, there is no ontological or epistemological warrant for making such a call *universally*. That is, biblical readers who do not participate in the historical-critical discourse of academic biblical interpretation cannot be (oppressively) made to be "students" and told that their readings are not "legitimate" (Patte 1995:42) if they are not filtered through this particular technique and its body of discursive content. Recall Adam's insight "that our Grandma may produce a sounder interpretation of a psalm than does a Reverend Professor. If she wants to make a claim about the historical likelihood of one or another event, we will probably assay her claim with help from those who have immersed their lives in judging such claims" (1995b:35–36). To the extent that ecclesiastic biblical interpretations wander onto the discursive territory of academic biblical interpretation, they may be asked to be considerate of the local customs of historical criticism (cf. Adam 1995b:65), but academic biblical interpretation does not have jurisdiction over the entire landscape of biblical interpretation.

The approach that social-scientific criticism must take with its extra-discursive neighbors, then, will be different from that taken within academic discourse. In the latter case, social-scientific critics make forceful and persuasive pleas for their concerns to be included

in the common discourse. In the former case, however, there is no common discourse. What can social-scientific biblical interpretations offer to readers of the Bible who practice interpretation outside the boundaries of academic, historical-critical discourse? Once again, it is postmodern thought that shapes my suggestion here. In a philosophical environment where foundations are deconstructed, totalities are fractured, and absolutes are denied, how does disciplined reflection on any topic proceed? The analogy of a building—where "solid" arguments are "built" upon strong "foundations"—is no longer serviceable (see Deist 2000:39–40). An alternative analogy is that of a web, where various strands or threads are found to be in complex interrelations with each other (the analogy is attributed to Willard V. O. Quine by Murphy [1994:12–13]). The work of identifying and fostering these relationships is helpfully illuminated by the metaphor of "negotiation" (see Litchfield 2004).

Randy Litchfield develops this metaphor in his reflections focused upon the context of a "local Bible study."

> Regarding the distinction between academic and lay readings of the Bible, Bible study leaders will need to recognize the integrity of both sides and facilitate a local study group's negotiation of the differences. The assessment of each reading's authenticity and integrity will rest more on the contested ground of ethical implications than on the protocols of a school of criticism. (Litchfield 2004:239)

Reflected here is the recognition that "academic" and "lay" readings of the Bible are distinct, or, as I suggest, that they participate in different discourses. What a local Bible study "does" with that difference—in a postmodern setting—is not to subjugate one reading (i.e., the "lay" reading) to the other (i.e., the "academic" reading) but rather to "negotiate" the contrast between the two. And in that inter-discursive negotiation, the rules of one discourse do not automatically supersede the rules of another. Litchfield points to, once again, *ethics* as playing a greater role in this negotiation than do "the protocols of a school of criticism," i.e., academic discourse. Note, too, that his reference to ethical *implications* encourages us to consider the very real material effects of such different readings.

At this level of inter-discursive negotiating of contrasts, social-scientific criticism makes a two-fold contribution to the reading of the Bible that is done outside the boundaries of academic biblical interpretation. One the one hand, social-scientific criticism provides

"academic" readings of the Bible that are different from "lay" readings (cf. Litchfield 2004:245). Specifically, social-scientific readings take into account the cultural differences between biblical texts, with their ancient authors and audiences, and modern-day readers, who are often unaware of the differences and thus unable to account for them in their own readings. Note, social-scientific criticism is not at this point (oppressively) demanding that all readers *become* aware of the differences and account for them in their own readings. *That* call is being sounded *within the discourse of academic biblical interpretation* (if we are to understand these ancient documents *historically*, as their ancient audiences did, we will have to give due critical attention to the cultural aspect of how these texts communicated). To our extra-discursive neighbors, however, the call is to consider the readings produced by social-scientific critics and include them among the readings being negotiated.

On the other hand, a second contribution that social-scientific readings make to postmodern, inter-discursive negotiation is by providing a reading that *is itself the product of a negotiation of contrasts*. In a postmodern setting where contrasts of gender, ethnicity, class, etc., are attended to for their hermeneutical fruitfulness, the practice of social-scientific criticism demonstrates that same concern for the interpretive richness of contrast—*cultural* contrast. When a local Bible study undertakes to engage and negotiate with different readings,

> one reading probably should be informed by scholarship, reflecting historical, cultural and linguistic background for the text. Such a reading supports stewardship of the text and a contrast between the origins of the text and the current community. One or more readings should reflect contrasts based in gender, ethnicity, class, denomination or religion, depending on the text. . . . These contrasting readings will provide opportunities to become aware of the group's identities and ethical responsibilities. (Litchfield 2004:245)

Social-scientific criticism not only provides a "historical" reading to contrast with contemporary readings provided by the "current community," but it also provides a reading which itself takes into account precisely that list of cultural differences (now with an added historical dimension) that are so important to contemporary readers. In addition to the contrasting ways in which we discover gender, ethnicity, class, etc., to be constructed in the contemporary world, social-scientific criticism can add a variety of ways that gender, ethnicity,

class, etc., were constructed in the ancient world and appear to be operative in the biblical texts. The results of social-scientific criticism are thus not an oppressive force by which to subjugate "naïve" readings (cf. Litchfield 2004:239) but rather a constructive addition to the fruitful work of negotiating contrasts in biblical interpretation.

In summary, though the rhetoric of social-scientific criticism can appear to participate in much that postmodern thinkers would criticize about modernity, social-scientific criticism is an endeavor that has arisen along with—and is indeed enabled by—postmodern thought, and it has much to contribute in ways that are fully consonant with postmodern concerns.

2.1.5 *Social-Scientific Reading*

Furthermore, it is to postmodern thought that social-scientific criticism owes much of its procedure: its explicit use of theory and models, its interdisciplinary character, and its sophisticated approach to reading texts. For example, social-scientific criticism operates with a sophisticated conception of reading which owes much to contemporary sociolinguistics (e.g., Malina 1991a and 1996c:3–31; Deist 2000:23–50, who develops the "principle of relevance" from Sperber and Wilson 1986). By providing a helpful typology of the functions of language, the work of M. A. K. Halliday is especially helpful in this regard (see Blount 1995). Halliday identifies three semantic "macro-functions" (1973:36) of language: the textual, the ideational, and the interpersonal. The textual has to do with the actual medium—for biblical scholars, the grammatical components of a written text. The ideational has to do with the information and experiences being communicated. Finally, the interpersonal has to do with the social dynamics of the communicative act. In applying Halliday's insights to New Testament criticism, Brian Blount divides the interpersonal into two levels, the micro-interpersonal and the macro-interpersonal (1995:92–96). The micro-interpersonal level includes the internal and external influences that guide later interpreters in their work. The macro-interpersonal level is concerned with only those influences that affected the author and original audience (see Figure 1).

For Blount, the macro-interpersonal plays a stabilizing role, creating boundaries that an interpretation (under the constraints of historical-critical discourse) should not cross. "If that macro-interpersonal consideration is not allowed an independent hearing, however, the investigator will tend . . . to impose modern meanings that, though

macro-function:	textual	ideational	interpersonal	
			macro-interpersonal	micro-interpersonal
attends to:	grammatical components of a written text	information and experiences being communicated	internal and external social influences on the *author* and *original audience*	internal and external social influences on the *later interpreter*

Figure 1. Halliday's macro-functions (1973), adapted by Blount (1995)

micro-interpersonally significant [that is, to the modern interpreter's own situation], are not macro-interpersonally appropriate" (1995:181). This concern to avoid inappropriateness echoes social-scientific criticism's concern to avoid anachronism and ethnocentrism. Social-scientific criticism insists that the ancient social and cultural contexts be included among those influences that affected the original author and audience which are investigated at the macro-interpersonal level; if they are not, then the present-day social and cultural contexts which influence interpreters at the micro-interpersonal level will substitute their own guiding influence, rendering an inappropriately anachronistic and ethnocentric reading. In other words, Minerva Louise will conclude that the children's school cubbies are in fact brooder hutches.

This attention to the historical, macro-interpersonal function of language need not be pursued with the (negative) air of modernist historicism. This model of reading can allow for a constructive and creative approach to postmodern or "nonmodern" (see Adam 1995a: 1–5) social-scientific criticism. Postmodern thought, of course, does not insist that historical questions *cannot* be asked; it merely removes them from their position of privilege as *the only* questions that may legitimately be asked. Instead, postmodern thought insists that a case must be made for asking historical questions, i.e., for engaging in that discourse, just as a case must be made for asking theological, political, aesthetic, or other questions. Thus, the mere fact that social-scientific criticism inquires into the historical contexts of society and culture that prevailed in the ancient world at the time of the composition of biblical texts does not *necessarily* pollute that inquiry with the negative taint of modernity and the imposed hegemony of historical criticism. These historical questions can be pursued by a

procedure that fully respects the contemporary diversity of postmodern interpretive concerns. Such a procedure will make a case for the questions it asks and lay bare its presuppositions in the form of explicit models employed to address the specific questions.

The case for the questions can be made with reference to the sociolinguist analysis of language outlined above. While many interpreters today are demonstrating concern for the micro-interpersonal level of their interpretation through reflexive and self-critical attention to the social and cultural, political and ideological influences which guide their own work (evidenced, for example, by the lengthy series of introductory articles in the *New Interpreter's Bible*, "Reading the Bible as . . ." [*NIB* 1:150–87]), social-scientific critics inquire into those influences which guided the interpretive work of *ancient* readers of biblical texts. What present-day scholars treat as the macro-interpersonal level of the text (i.e., the influences—including social and cultural—that affected the original author and audience) were, *for those ancient authors and audiences*, micro-interpersonal (i.e., they were the social and cultural influences that affected them as interpreters). Thus, while postmodern thought has provided ways to take these influences into consideration for the present-day interpreter, social-scientific criticism considers their influence on the ancient interpreter (i.e., the ancient audience).

"To interpret the originally intended meanings set out in the text . . . the contemporary reader must have access to the social system(s) available to the original audience of those texts. To recover those social systems, we believe it essential to employ adequate, explicit social science models" (Malina 1996c:13). Though the phrase Malina uses to articulate his goal ("originally intended meanings set out in the text") demonstrates the kind of overstatement that Burnett and Segovia object to, the goal is nonetheless a legitimate one for scholarly inquiry. To avoid the modernist assumptions implied in Malina's articulation, the goal may be described instead as inquiring into the sense made of the text by ancient readers. The particular group of ancient readers in view can be specified further in each case, and the social system of that group then becomes the object of inquiry for help in proposing how they "made sense" of the text. The vocabulary of "making sense" rather than "understanding" is developed by Adam (1995a:169–81). Whereas "understanding" implies that the meaning sought by the interpreter is somehow resident *in* the text, awaiting the proper method for extract-

ing it, "making sense" recognizes the active role of the interpreter operating under a myriad of influences and interests. "In short, sense is something *ascribed to* the text, not a property that the text *has*" (Adam 1995a:171). The influences and interests that drive the social-scientific interpreter in general are identified as "presuppositions" by Elliott (1993:36–59) and may be identified specifically by each interpreter for each case. The way in which social-scientific critics are interested in making sense of a biblical text is by employing explicit social science models to investigate how ancient audiences made sense of the text through the influences of their social and cultural context. This interest is driven by the expectation that the ancient social and cultural context was different from the present-day interpreter's context just as one present-day culture differs from another for the visiting traveler (see Elliott 1993:58–59, and recall the experience of Bohannan with Shakespeare among the Tiv). Social-scientific biblical critics seek to explore that difference and reflect on the contrasts between the ways recent interpreters make sense of a biblical text and the ways ancient audiences made sense of the same text in their own distinct social and cultural context.

2.2 *On the Map of the Social Sciences*

2.2.1 *Divisions within the Social Sciences*

The social sciences include a number of distinct fields on the present academic landscape: economics, sociology, political science, anthropology, even history (see Eickelman 1998:19–26). Each of them may have some bearing on the work of a particular social-scientific biblical critic, but interaction with anthropology has had the most significant impact on recent biblical study and is of central concern for this reading of Daniel 1–6. One reason for this impact is that anthropology has the cross-cultural sensitivity to recognize that while in modern Western societies economics, religion, politics, kinship, education, etc., are explicit domains (defined, briefly, as "an institutional system or constellation of social institutions" [Hanson and Oakman 1998:196; cf. Deist 2000:102–05]), they were not so for ancient societies. "In the simplest forms of society . . . all institutions are embedded in kinship" (Hanson and Oakman 1998:20). In the advanced agrarian society of the ancient biblical Mediterranean, politics was a second explicit domain, but kinship was the primary one. Institutions having to do with economics and religion and education

were embedded in politics and, primarily, in kinship (cf. Malina 1986a:84–87 and 2001b:16–19). This insight has made significant inroads not only among New Testament scholars and those who study Greco-Roman culture but also among Hebrew Bible scholars and those who study the ancient Near East. To cite but one example, Frank Moore Cross has recently argued that the crucial concept of "covenant" is best understood not in legal terms but in kinship terms (1998:3–21; Cross redefines a number of other central Hebrew Bible terms into the language of kinship as well; cf. Matthews and Benjamin 1993:7–9).

Anthropology itself, however, is also divided into a number of subfields: physical anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and cultural anthropology (known in Britain as social anthropology) (Peoples and Bailey 1991:2–5). Cultural anthropology is the principal ally of social-scientific biblical criticism, though the contributions of linguistics have already been mentioned (e.g., Halliday's sociolinguistic study), and the enterprise of examining an ancient society as a whole clearly owes much to archaeology (see, e.g., King and Stager 2001). However, the focus upon cultural anthropology is a particular emphasis of biblical study as an exercise in analysis and interpretation as opposed to social-scientific criticism's possible alternative task of social and historical description (see above, 2.1.2; Elliott 1993:18–21).

2.2.2 *Paradigms for Cultural Anthropology*

"There is no clear agreement among its leading practitioners on a central paradigm for research" in the field of anthropology (Eickelman 1998:20). As in the field of biblical interpretation, however, major theoretical frameworks can be identified and considered in relationship to social-scientific criticism. James Peoples and Garrick Bailey provide an historical overview of diverse approaches, including evolutionary theories, functionalism, materialism, and idealism (1991:68–90). Jerry Moore organizes his overview thematically, though it also tends to follow an historical progression through a series of profiles of significant practitioners (1997). The sense of historical progression is perhaps inevitable, as the history of the discipline includes several theoretical frameworks that have, in turn, fallen into disfavor and disuse. Thus, evolutionary theories are no longer considered adequate, and the highly influential functionalism of the early- to mid-twentieth century is now "moribund" (Eickelman 1998:46, see 46–51), though it continues to exercise a limited influence. Contemporary debates,

sparked largely by the advent of postmodern thought, rage over the character of anthropology as either a scientific or a humanistic discipline (see J. Moore 1997:271–76).

Social-scientific biblical critics often include a minor notice about the theoretical framework with which their study interacts. For example, Malina briefly explores the structural-functionalist approach and the conflict approach before expressing his favor for the symbolic approach for his analysis of fasting (Malina 1986a:190–91). Elsewhere, he discusses all three of these approaches to prepare readers for his use of anthropological studies which have been done in each of the three distinct manners (Malina 2001a:19–24). An issue of the journal *Forum* includes readings of Mark 7 from conflict (Malina 1988a), structural functionalist (Pilch 1988), and symbolic (Neyrey 1988) approaches. Deist surveys evolutionist, structuralist, structural-functionalist, configurationalist, and ethnohistorical approaches (2000:84–94) before deciding on an eclectic but predominantly configurationalist approach for his own work (2000:94–96). Deist refers to the configurationalist also as an "ideational" approach (2000:94), and his description of it matches Malina's and Neyrey's descriptions of their "symbolic" approaches.

> In this view, all cultural behaviour is of a *symbolic* nature, that is, carries *meaning* that is shared by the group and abstracted by the individual from the social system through participatory interaction. Each human act thus has meaning. All such meanings tend to 'cluster' around central or core values, premises or goals. Culture is looked upon as an integrative configurational symbolic system to which a cultural group ascribes. (Deist 2000:90)

Reading Daniel 1–6 from the perspective of second-century BCE Judean readers will draw principally upon anthropology's symbolic approach to understanding meaning in cultural context.

2.2.3 *The Anthropology of Honor*

The discipline of anthropology has developed not only an array of methodological approaches but also a number of variously-defined subspecialties. For example, honor and shame have been identified as topics of explicit anthropological study since only the 1960s. The names of Julian Pitt-Rivers (1961 and 1977) and J. G. Peristiany (1966) are often mentioned as among the pioneers in this work (e.g., by Gilmore 1987; Brandes 1987). Along with their attention to honor and shame was a focus on the circum-Mediterranean as the area of

their study. As anthropology has divided itself into "area studies," the Mediterranean has become a standard subspecialty (even though Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers deny that such was their intention [1992: 5–6]). Of course, the study of Mediterranean honor and shame has not gone uncriticized (e.g., Lever 1988; Wikan 1984; see the overview provided by Chance 1994:140–41), and the critical engagement of anthropologists with each other has fueled a continuing development in Mediterranean studies and its attention to honor and shame. To the extent that the biblical scholarship that has employed these anthropological models has tended to rely most heavily on the works found in Peristiany's early collection of essays (1966)—a fact noted by Chance (1994:142)—it is important to continue monitoring the conversation among anthropologists as they work to refine the model and theories of Mediterranean honor and shame.

Criticism of Mediterranean honor and shame has focused partly on the very combination of those two items—the Mediterranean as a cultural unit for study, and honor and shame as uniquely pertinent cultural values to be attended to in that study. Questions about the viability of an honor-shame paradigm have come from two directions. On the one hand, critics have suggested that honor and shame are not uniquely limited to the Mediterranean area but have currency in other cultural settings as well (e.g., Asano-Tamanoi 1987; Chance 1994:139–40; cf. Laniak 1998). Thus, honor and shame are broader ideas than a focus on the Mediterranean alone indicates. On the other hand, critics have suggested that the Mediterranean model of honor and shame is too broad, too general and abstract, to be useful for the investigation of local variations (e.g., Herzfeld 1980 and 1984). Indeed, a focus on honor and shame can obscure the distinctive features of any given specific society ("there is more to Mediterranean culture than honor and shame" [Chance 1994:148–49]). Thus, honor and shame have peculiar particularities that are obscured by applying them generally to an area even as large as the Mediterranean. From both of these directions, the unity of the Mediterranean ("the Levant, North Africa, and Southern Europe" [Brandes 1987:121]) as a cultural area of study has been questioned. The collection of essays edited by David Gilmore (1987) gives particular attention to these questions. If honor and shame are more pervasive than the limited scope of the Mediterranean would allow, then anthropologists ask what constitutes the distinctiveness of the Mediterranean as an area (see the essay by Gilmore [1987]). Conversely, if the notion

of "honor and shame" involves abstractions that are too general to explain the diversity of the various societies that surround the Mediterranean, then one wonders if it serves to unite the area artificially and to impose a value structure that may not play a dominant role. In response to this latter concern, recent studies have proposed semantic distinctions to enrich the vocabulary involved in refining these cultural values (e.g., "hospitality" [Herzfeld 1987]; "grace" [Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992]).

The use of anthropological theories and models of honor and shame has become a recognized part of biblical scholarship. Issues of the journal *Semeia* have been devoted not only to social-scientific criticism in general (applied to the New Testament in Elliott 1986; applied to the Hebrew Bible in Gottwald 1986 and Simkins and Cook 1999) but also to honor and shame in particular (Matthews and Benjamin 1994). Even scholars who do not use explicit theories and models as the focus of their methodology nonetheless find it increasingly necessary to give at least some attention to the influence of the ancient cultural values of honor and shame (e.g., Collins 1997:34–35). Of course, the appearance of this approach in biblical studies has not gone without its critics, either. The *Semeia* issue dealing with *Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible* (Matthews and Benjamin 1994) includes two critical responses from anthropologists (Chance 1994; Kressel 1994). Both of them encourage further refinement of the models, and John Chance in particular expresses a desire for continued constructive conversation between the disciplines of anthropology and biblical studies (1994:142–43). Criticism has come from other biblical scholars, as well, some of whom find that attention to honor and shame is not misplaced, but perhaps overdrawn (e.g., Downing 1999). More substantive criticism among biblical scholars has come from postmodern thought, as discussed above (see 2.1.4).

3 *A Social-Scientific Reading of Daniel 1–6*

The first six chapters of the book of Daniel are a set of six tales whose stories are set, literarily, in the sixth century BCE, spanning the era of ancient Judah's Babylonian exile. The idea that they originated in that setting, however, is defended now by only the most conservative of biblical interpreters (see the brief discussion of Collins

[2001b:1–2, 6] or the longer one of Grabbe [1987]). Debate continues over the question of how early in the post-exilic Persian period they may have originated, perhaps not yet as written accounts, or how late in the Hellenistic period it may have been, even down to the mid-second century BCE period when the visionary material that constitutes the rest of the book of Daniel is generally thought to have been written (see Collins 1993:24–38). The scenario imagined in this study does not require an answer to the question of when these tales originated and in what form. The evidence at Qumran confirms for us that a text like that which eventually became the Masoretic Text (MT) existed already by the end of the second century BCE (as in the case of 4QDan^{c} [Ulrich 1989:3, 18]; 4QDan^{a-b} are slightly later manuscripts, but they exemplify the same general literary edition [see Ulrich 1987:17 and 1992:283–84]). Note well, this is not to say that other forms of the Daniel material did not continue to circulate, nor that Daniel material did not continue to develop; indeed, the rich history of the Greek translations and editions attests to the continued literary development of this material. The MT edition, however, serves as the focus of our study, and this form of the text was in circulation at least as early as its Qumran witnesses (see Ulrich 1999:149–50, 161–62; cf. DJD 16.239–89). The consensus from all quarters is that the book of Daniel, including this collection of six tales, existed in the mid-second century BCE, and our concern here is not for authors' intention but for readers' perception. How could these tales have functioned for second-century Judeans who were suffering under the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes? What social and cultural cues were operative and would have influenced the way second-century Judean readers would have "made sense" (cf. Adam 1995a:169–81; see above, 2.1.5) of these tales? The presence and central significance of honor as a core value is what makes a difference in this reading of Daniel 1–6.

The entirety of this present study constitutes an argument for the use of an anthropological model of honor in order to read Daniel 1–6. Nonetheless, a briefer statement of some of the planks in that argument is valuable in summary form here. The model of honor outlined below (3.1) depends upon modern-day anthropological studies and has been adapted for use in the ancient world primarily by New Testament scholars (see above, 2.1.3). Along with other classicists who study the Greco-Roman tradition, these scholars have enjoyed the great benefit of explicit "conceptualization" (G. Kennedy

1984:10–11) of cultural scripts in the ancient Greek rhetorical tradition. Unfortunately, nothing comparable has been identified in the Aramaic literature of the Persian period nor in the Hebrew literature of the ancient Israelites and Judeans specifically. (Wisdom literature of the ancient Near East may very well prove to be the comparable body of material, in which cultural codes are made explicit and reflected upon, but a study of ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature under this rubric has yet to be carried out.) Nevertheless, there are two very good reasons for contending that what anthropologists and classicists have discovered about honor in the ancient world is fully applicable and entirely appropriate for use in reading Daniel 1–6.

First, the model of honor outlined below depends heavily upon and is rooted firmly in kinship as the basic—if not the only—domain which was explicit in ancient society. Honor, as it is described in this model, operates as a function of kinship. Scholars are becoming increasingly sensitive to the dominant role that kinship plays in the world reflected in the texts of Bible (see again Cross 1998:3–21, as well as recent extended treatments like Perdue et al. 1997). Philip King and Lawrence Stager remind us that "family and household constituted the basic social unit in ancient Israel, as well as the most widely used literary metaphor" (2001:36). The model of honor and this reading of Daniel 1–6 are tied closely to kinship at almost every turn. Honor is ascribed by birth, replicated by blood and by name, and owned collectively by the group to which one belongs (see below, 3.1). Likewise, the system of patronage that is described below and employed in this reading of Daniel 1–6 is a model that pertains just as much to ancient Israel as to ancient Rome (Lemche 1994; Hobbs 1997; McNutt 1999:170–71; Simkins 1999). Ronald Simkins's description of patronage in Israel demonstrates its relation to kinship and to honor.

> The exchange between patrons and clients is based on reciprocity, and the relationship between them is idealized as friendship and expressed in terms of kinship. The patron is a "father" to his clients, who honor him as "sons" and faithful "servants." Patron-client relations are foremost personal bonds to which one's identity and honor are committed. (1999:128)

The additional extension placed on these concepts by the biblical material is that these dynamics are at work not only among humans but between humanity and God as well (Malina 1998d). "Patronage

is the root metaphor underlying the fundamental idea of covenant in the biblical literature. Yahweh is the divine patron who protects and provides for his people Israel" (Simkins 1999:129). "In the religious sphere, the intimate relationship with the family god, the 'God of the fathers' [cf. Dan 2:23], was expressed in the only language available to members of a tribal society. Their god was the Divine Kinsman" (Cross 1998:6). Thus, the significance of kinship is an important link between anthropological models of honor and these ancient texts.

Second, in addition to the contention that the ancient Near Eastern culture of Israel and Judah in fact participated in the cultural scripts which are described by the model of honor used here, the second-century BCE setting against which we are reading Daniel 1–6 includes significant influence from Hellenism. The contention here is *not* that Judean society *developed* cultural characteristics like the value of honor or patron-client relations *because of* their contact with Greek civilization and culture. We are proceeding as if those cultural characteristics were *already present* before the dramatically increased exposure to Hellenism that followed Alexander's conquests in the fourth century BCE. If that increased exposure during the Hellenistic period affected Judean society at all, it served to *strengthen* the operative cultural cues and to make them *more explicit* by means of an explicit rhetorical tradition and the effort of subjugated peoples to adjust to this new era of Hellenism. One of the ways that non-Greeks adjusted to the imposition of all things Greek was by resisting what they identified as "foreign" to their own tradition. Thus, the Maccabean literature takes an explicitly anti-Hellenistic rhetorical position (e.g., 1 Macc 1:11–15; 2 Macc 4:7–17). This is not a rejection of the larger cultural structure, however, but only a rejection of the specifically Greek *content* of that structure. Thus, for example, loyalty to one's patron (including God as Divine Patron) is considered honorable; that part is structural and is constant. The variation comes in the content: to what god, to *whose* god shall we be loyal? That part is specific content and varies from people to people and from place to place (see below, Chapter Six, 1.1). The contention of this study is that second-century Judean readers participated fully in the common honor-shame structures of advanced agrarian cultures around the Mediterranean and that precisely within those common structures the stories of Daniel 1–6 were read as a support for resistance to the Hellenistic content of those same structures.

It is therefore appropriate to read Daniel 1–6 through the lens of the model of honor described below not only because the encounter with Hellenism had reinforced its dynamics but also because they were already operative even in previous eras of Israelite and Judean history. The entirety of this present study stands as a further argument for the applicability and appropriateness of the use of these models in the reading and interpreting of the texts of the Hebrew Bible. The amount and variety of material read through social-scientific models is growing, and each new treatment provides more grist for the mill of "abduction." Abduction is the scholarly meta-process of employing models to read texts, using those readings to modify the models, then re-applying the models and so on, continuing a back-and-forth dialogue to confirm and improve both the models and the readings (Malina 1991a and 1991b; Neyrey 1998c:32; cf. Deist 2000:19–23). The strength of this model of honor and of this social-scientific approach to biblical interpretation is being put to the test once again, this time by a detailed exposition of the tales of Daniel 1–6.

3.1 *A Model of Honor*

The model of honor used here to read Daniel 1–6 was developed from a variety of anthropological studies and has been well-presented in more than one place (e.g., Malina 2001a:27–57; Malina and Neyrey 1991c; Neyrey 1998c:14–34). The abbreviated presentation here follows those more extended presentations, which should be consulted for a fuller understanding.

3.1.1 *Definition of Honor*

Pitt-Rivers provides this concise definition:

> Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride. (1977:1, emphasis his)

Malina phrases it similarly: "Honor is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgment of worth" (2001a:30). As both of these definitions emphasize, honor is a social commodity. It exists not in one's own mind, nor is it a simple matter of self-esteem. Rather, it exists in the relationships between people, as claims to worth are assayed and assessed publicly by the society. "Honor . . . serves as a

register of social rating which entitles a person to interact in specific ways with equals, superiors, and subordinates, according to the prescribed cultural cues of the society" (Malina and Neyrey 1991c:26). This abstract definition of honor is filled in by local content that determines precisely *what* is honorable or not. "Honor . . . is the constant; but what constitutes honor might vary from locale to locale, from situation to situation" (Malina and Neyrey 1991c:27; cf. Malina 2001a:51–52). As mentioned above, this variation of content in the common structure of honor will play a significant role in our reading of Daniel 1–6.

3.1.2 *Sources of Honor*

Honor can be ascribed, and honor can be achieved. Ascribed honor is that which accrues to a person by birth (sharing the honor of one's kin) or by bestowal (receiving grants of honor from others who have status and power). Achieved honor, on the other hand, is that which is acquired through demonstrations of excellence and by wresting it away from others.

3.1.3 *Achieving Honor*

The principal means by which honor is achieved is the social struggle known as challenge and riposte. In order to apprehend challenge and riposte fully, it is necessary first to understand two related concepts. First, like all resources, honor was perceived as a limited good in the ancient world (see Malina 2001a:81–107). Therefore, seen in terms of a zero-sum game, one person's gain of honor *necessarily* entails another's loss of honor. Second, the resulting concern to protect and maintain one's honor produces an undercurrent of potential conflict in social interactions, as the parties seek an opportunity to gain honor while being careful to preserve the honor they already possess. These dynamics characterize an agonistic culture. Such societies "tend to consider all social interactions outside the family . . . as potential contests for honor" (Malina and Neyrey 1991c:29). The perception of limited good and the agonistic character of ancient society form the backdrop for the social drama of challenge and riposte. Typical elements play out in predictable ways and are presented graphically by Pierre Bourdieu (1966:215), who is followed by Malina (2001a:34). The basic structure includes: (1) a claim to honor, (2) a challenge to that claim, (3) a response to the challenge, and

(4) a public verdict (Malina and Neyrey 1991c:30). Claims and challenges take a variety of forms, and there are a number of responses possible (these are discussed in greater detail below, in Chapter Three, 2.1). Based on how the drama plays out, the public audience who witnesses it grants honor to the one who has prevailed and thereby achieves honor.

3.1.4 *Envy*

Another element at work in an agonistic setting of limited good is the dynamic of envy. "Envy is pain at seeing another succeed with an accompanying desire to harm the other and level his advance in prestige" (Neyrey 1998c:19; see also Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998). Envy is a major motivation in the game of challenge and riposte, and we will see that it plays a significant role in the tales of Daniel 1–6 (see below, Chapter Four).

3.1.5 *Replication of Honor*

Honor is replicated by blood and by name (see Neyrey 1998c:52–59). Honor is presumed to exist among one's own family, but those who are not blood relatives are considered to be potential enemies unless and until they prove themselves to be trustworthy and honorable. The honor of a kin group is then recognized in its name. A "good name" is a prized possession, because it carries with it the honor capital that one needs for social interaction. As the label by which people are judged to be honorable or dishonorable, the family name is protected at all costs.

3.1.6 *Symbols of Honor*

Honor is also symbolized in the physical body, which in turn replicates the social body (cf. Scarry 1985). Not only are certain parts of the body (e.g., head, face) more honorable than other parts (e.g., backside), but the clothing and presentation of the body display honor status as well. The degree of concern shown for the purity and pollution of the physical body is replicated in similar concern for the social body. This results in maps of persons, places, times, and things, all arranged on a scale of honor. For example, just as the head is the most honorable part of the physical body, so the "head" of the table is the seat of highest honor in a group.

3.1.7 *Collective Honor*

Finally, we must be careful to remember that these dynamics were at work in a society that functioned primarily in terms of group identity rather than individual identity. Thus, honor resides in the group, and challenges are played out with the results bearing on the status of the entire group.

3.1.8 *Honor-Related Social Institutions*

Though honor is the dominant category of social-scientific analysis employed here, there are several other models that are also engaged, each of which can be understood in some relation to the primary matrix of honor. Honor has been called the "paramount value" of the ancient Mediterranean world (Malina and Neyrey 1991c:25; see also Plevnik 1998:106; Malina 2001a:27–57; for critique of this position, see Downing 1999; Lever 1988). With honor in the central place, a wide variety of other social values and systems can be understood in relation to honor, with which they are linked in complex ways. For example, concerns for purity and pollution, which can be studied independently (e.g., Douglas 1966; Pilch 1998d; Malina 2001a:161–97), can also be understood as related to honor. A system of purity draws boundaries which separate the pure/clean/holy from the impure/unclean/profane, which are equally categories for honor and dishonor, respectively. Further, the one who observes these boundaries and is careful to maintain purity and avoid pollution is regarded as honorable by meeting the expectations of the society with regard to purity.

> In Mediterranean biblical society, purity marks a person who knows how to be clean rather than unclean, pure rather than polluted—in other words, how to maintain honor and avoid shame. Purity thus is a means value because it facilitates the realization of the core values of honor and shame. (Pilch 1998d:170–71)

With honor as the core value of a society, all the various dynamics of social interaction function to facilitate trade in the currency of honor. Indeed, honor serves as the major motivating force in social interaction. "Honor and shame are public and therefore reflect external social pressure to conform to social norms" (Plevnik 1998:114). In addition to the technique of challenge and riposte, then, honor is gained and maintained by properly fulfilling the expectations of society.

This dynamic is different from that in modern Western society, where it is necessary for people to "internalize a sense of obligation and feel appropriate internal sentiments about observing social norms or failing to observe them" (Plevnik 1998:114). Social scientists describe this difference of personality types in various ways: psychological orientation *vs.* social orientation, individualist persons *vs.* group-oriented persons, individual personality *vs.* dyadic personality (Malina and Neyrey 1991b:72–76).

> Group-oriented persons internalize and make their own what others say, do, and think about them because they believe it is necessary, if they are to be human beings, to live out the expectations of others. They need to test this interrelatedness, moving the focus of attention away from their own egos and toward the demands and expectations of others who can grant or withhold reputation or honor. (Malina and Neyrey 1991b:73)

The peoples of the ancient biblical world were group-oriented. They were given their identity by the groups to which they belonged—family, clan, *ethnos*, perhaps craft or trade guild, party or group (e.g., Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.) (Malina and Neyrey 1991b:74–75). And it is the honor and reputation of this group that they must protect before the audience of the general public, who makes grants of honor or dishonor not only at the outcome of a challenge but also in the everyday dealings of life as one meets, or fails to meet, social expectations.

What are these expectations; what constitutes this social "code" by which the ancient person was to live? Scholars know it from clues found especially in the rhetorical handbooks of the ancient Mediterranean, but its "utter conventionality," along with the vast network of accompanying nonverbal clues (statues of heroes and benefactors, temples and the gifts which adorned them, etc.), leads to the conclusion that ancient persons knew it by socialization into a culture saturated in the language of honor and shame (Neyrey 1998c:9–10).

> [We] claim the existence of a "general code" or a conventional "language" of honor and shame, which was widely known throughout the Mediterranean basin for centuries. Elites and non-elites, urban and rural all knew in some fashion this "general code"; all understood and spoke this "language" in their speech, clothing, self-presentation, social intercourse, and the like. That "language," then, need not be Greek. (Neyrey 1998c:10)

The advantage of studying this code on the basis of ancient Greek sources is that the Greeks reflected consciously upon these dynamics—they called them "praise and blame"—that modern anthropologists have dubbed "honor and shame" (see Neyrey 1998c:70–89). As early as Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (fourth century BCE), and repeated countless times by others both Greek and Latin, the categories and contents of praise/honor and blame/shame were presented systematically for educational purposes. They continue to educate us today about ancient society.

The material which most explicitly reveals the ancient values of honor and shame belongs to the category of epideictic rhetoric, whose end and purpose was public praise or blame (see Neyrey 1998c:70–89 for a fuller description). The rhetorical exercise that deals in particular with praise is the *encomium*. Neyrey summarizes what the ancient rhetorical handbooks (called *progymnasmata*; see the collection and translations by G. Kennedy 2003) present as the proper way to compose an *encomium* by which to praise someone (1998c:78–83; cf. Neyrey 1994; Malina and Neyrey 1996:23–33). The praise is rendered by demonstrating a person's honor, and that is done by rehearsing the stages of human life and lauding specific honorable elements at each stage. The standard categories include (1) origin and birth, (2) nurture and training (education), and (3) accomplishments (including deeds of the body, deeds of the soul, and deeds of fortune). Sometimes a fourth category, comparison, is included. In other cases, comparison is presented as a distinct form, but one that proceeds by means of the *encomium*. The Progymnasmata of Aphthonius says, "in short, the comparison is a two-fold encomium" (from Nadeau 1952:277; see also G. Kennedy 2003:114; cf. the Progymnasmata of Aelius Theon [G. Kennedy 2003:52–55] and the Progymnasmata of Hermogenes [G. Kennedy 2003:83–84]). In the first category, one is praised for the ascribed honor that accrues from good breeding; the offspring of an honorable line thereby share the honor of their ancestors. In the second category, "individuals are praiseworthy because they trained under honorable teachers and masters, who presumably imparted the social expectations of their social group to the next generation" (Neyrey 1998c:80). In the third category, praiseworthy deeds of the body include health, beauty, strength, and stature, among other items. Deeds of the soul involve demonstrations of virtue (ἀρετή, "excellence"), especially the four cardinal virtues of wisdom/prudence, justice/righteousness, courage, and temperance/self-

control (Neyrey 1998c:106–23). Deeds of fortune are reflected in external aspects of one's life: wealth, good reputation, honor, friends, and good luck—in short, what Aristotle describes as "the kinds of good things . . . which incur envy" (*Rhet.* 1.5.17). Together, these categories and their characteristics provide the picture of an honorable person. Readers of Daniel 1–6 find these categories addressed in the tales and are thereby provided with indications of the honor of the tales' characters.

Finally, an understanding of patron-client relations helps in the reading of Daniel 1–6. Patronage, like purity, is a topic worthy of independent investigation (e.g., Eisenstadt and Roniger 1980; Moxnes 1991; Malina 1988b) but also stands in significant relationship to the dominant matrix of honor. To understand patronage, recall that honor, like all resources, was perceived to be a limited good (see Foster 1965). Further, the ancient world did not feature a social system like that which is prevalent in the modern West, a system in which access to goods and services is (ideally) to be provided equally to all (Moxnes 1991:242–44). Rather, the ancient person depended upon "dyadic alliances" (Malina 2001a:93–97), including the patron-client relationship, in order to acquire and maintain goods such as honor. "Patronage is a relationship in which, as a special favor, a patron provides for his client access to scarce resources that are not universally accessible" (Moxnes 1991:243). Several characteristics of patron-client relationships mentioned by Halvor Moxnes (1991:248) are significant for reading Daniel. First, the interaction between the patron and the client is based on exchange of different types of resources. Second, the solidarity of the relationship is based on obligations and honor. Finally, there is an inequality and difference in power between the patron and the client.

These three characteristics of patron-client relationships are interrelated in ways that can be observed by inquiring why a patron would voluntarily enter into a relationship with a client. As for the inequality and difference in power, the client is the lower-power party while the patron is the higher-power party, who has control over or access to resources needed by the client. Why would the patron work to empower the client? Part of the answer lies in the obligations of honor. We have seen that social expectations dictate honorable behavior. There is no honor for the patron who forsakes his client; the patron who provides well for his client, however, brings honor to his client as well as to himself. Indeed, it is for the sake of honor

that patrons act magnanimously not only toward their "friends" (see Moxnes 1991:244–46) but also toward their city or local community as a benefactor (see Moxnes 1991:249–50; cf. Danker 1982). There was competition between benefactors for prizes like public office as well as for public praise. Here we observe the exchange of different types of resources. While benefactor-patrons were able to provide goods and resources for public buildings and works projects as well as festivals and sacrifices, the community provided public praise—that is, honor—in exchange. The expected duty of the grateful client was to render praise and honor to the patron, all of which contributes to the patron's motivation for patronage—he receives commitment, loyalty, and praise (i.e., honor) from the client. As discussed above (§3), patronage was not limited to Roman society but was pervasive in the ancient Near East, including second-century Judea.

3.2 *Thesis and Prospectus*

A reading of Daniel 1–6 through the lens of the social-scientific models described above renders an appreciation of these tales as literature of resistance. They articulate a resistance to the perceived threat of a loss of Judean identity and heritage in the face of an overwhelming and oppressive Hellenistic domination. Resistance is articulated by means of a sustained comparison. Judean tradition, and the honor-laden relationship of patronage between the Judean people and their Judean God, is compared to the imposed tradition of the foreign oppressors (Babylonian for the text's sixth-century setting, Seleucid for the context's second-century audience). The comparison favors the Judean tradition and therefore sounds a call for fidelity to that tradition and its God. The comparison leaves the oppressor's tradition having been weighed and found wanting (cf. Dan 5:27) and therefore sounds a call for its refusal and rejection.

As the Masoretic version of the tales of Daniel 1–6 are treated in the following chapters, this sustained comparison is expressed from a number of different perspectives and with a variety of concerns in its purview. Chapter Two reads Daniel 1 and finds the stance of resistance articulated explicitly in the form of Daniel's resistance to the king's education, which is shown to be a forced acculturation and is refused. This opening tale compares the surpassing value of what Daniel's God provides to Daniel with the inferior value of what the foreign culture's tradition can provide to its devotees. Chapter

Three reads Daniel 2 and demonstrates clearly the excellence that Daniel achieves in his fidelity to the Judean God. This tale, too, casts Daniel in direct competition with his foreign counterparts, and once again the comparison favors Daniel as he displays his excellence and wins even greater honor by the successful handling of the challenge he faces. Chapter Four reads Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 and finds that this comparison has effected a great reversal. In these tales, it is not the subjugated people who are envious of the power or prestige or resources of their foreign oppressors but rather the Judeans' foreign counterparts who display envy and take action against Daniel and his companions on account of their excellence. The envious ones are not able to press their advantage, however, because in fact they have none. The comparison once again favors the Judeans, and decisively so—the tables are completely turned. Chapter Five reads Daniel 4 and Daniel 5 and finds the comparison heightened by the explicit addition of its divine ramifications. God is named as the source of Daniel's excellence throughout, but in these tales, God acts to exercise the divine excellence and ultimate sovereignty that settles the question once and for all. These tales make clear the consequences of the choice of loyalties that the Judean audience (including the Judean leadership) faces. If the force and allure of the foreign heritage is not resisted and the proper relationship to the Judean God is not honored, then it is not the judgment of one's social peers that matters any longer but rather the judgment of the one "in whose power is your life-breath" (Dan 5:23). Chapter Six, finally, reviews the findings of this social-scientific reading and makes explicit the transposition of significance from the sixth-century characters to the second-century realities of a Judean audience suffering under the imposition of a foreign tradition and facing the very real threat of losing their distinctive identity as faithful servants of the God of their ancestors. The tales of Daniel 1–6 are a compelling depiction of the alternative that faces the Judeans, but having weighed the alternative by comparison and found it wanting, the tales encourage a renewed fidelity to the one who has ultimate sovereignty, who is the worthy object of "thanks and praise" (Dan 2:23)—and "honor" (Dan 4:31, 34 [4:34, 37 Eng.]).

CHAPTER TWO

RESISTANCE: DANIEL 1

The book of Daniel appears to be more a compilation than a composition (for a variety of proposals about how the book came to be, see Hölscher 1919; Noth 1926; Ginsberg 1954; Rowley 1955; Gammie 1976; Albertz 1988; Polak 1993; cf. the survey and reflections by Henze 2001). As the opening chapter of this collection, Daniel 1 is charged with the task of both introducing the material in the compilation and providing grounds for unity and cohesion throughout the book. Daniel 1 performs that task admirably. The two main components of Daniel 1 are its basic introductory items and the tale of the food rejection (1:8–16) (Collins 1993:145). Consistent with the *reading* perspective proposed here, the designation of this material as "tale" is appropriate (regardless of the material's possible previous or subsequent transmission and appropriation). Designations for the genre of these chapters of Daniel have varied widely and are still debated (see the reviews of Koch [1980:88–91] and Collins [1993: 38–47], as well as the insightful remarks of Fewell [1988:10–14]). The generic designation "tale" is broad enough to allow for the important distinctions that are made when comparing not only the chapters within Daniel (e.g., Dan 3 and 6 as "tales of court conflict," and Dan 2, 4, and 5 as "tales of court contest" [Humphreys 1973]) but also the stories of Daniel with other stories (e.g., Joseph in Genesis, Esther, *Ahiqar* [Collins 1993:39–41; cf. Toorn 2001]). After a brief review of the contents of Daniel 1, these two components of the text will be read with the help of the anthropological model of honor outlined above in Chapter One.

1 *The Text*

1.1 *Daniel 1:1–7, 17–21*

Daniel 1:1–2 introduces the setting for the compilation. The time is the end of the Judean monarchy and the temple-based religion of the Judeans—a time of exile. The place is Babylon, called "the land

of Shinar" (1:2). The rarity of this geographic term makes its other appearances in the Bible conspicuous for comparison (other than a handful of occurrences in Gen, the term appears only in Josh 7:21, Isa 11:11 and Zech 5:11). In Genesis 11:1–9, Shinar is the location of the tower of Babel—a place of confusion. In Isaiah 11:11, Shinar is a place from which God will reclaim God's people—a place of diaspora. The Judeans live under foreign subjugation. Thus, this setting is familiar to second-century readers who likewise live under foreign subjugation—not Babylonian, but Seleucid.

Daniel 1:3–7 introduces the characters. The king instructs Ashpenaz (it is unclear whether this is to be taken as a personal name or simply an official designation [see Collins 1993:134]; it is important for Smith-Christopher's reading that this character be personalized, with a proper name, Ashpenaz [1996:42, 45]) to incorporate some of the Judean youths into his system, for his service. The vehicle for this incorporation is indoctrination; the youths are to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans (1:4). Further, the incorporation is to be utterly comprehensive, accomplished by providing not only education but also food and drink, that is, by "nurturing" (גדל, *pi'el*) in every sense (1:5). Four Judeans are identified in the text by name: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (1:6). As a part of this program of forced acculturation, however, their Babylonian overlords promptly change their names to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (1:7), thus attempting to strip them of their Judean identity.

Daniel 1:17–21 introduces God as the one who in fact prepares the four Judean youths for their service in the king's court. All of the skills desired by the king (compare 1:17 with 1:4; see below, Figure 3) are found in Daniel and his companions, with a special note that Daniel could understand all visions and dreams. Indeed, the abilities of these four Judeans are ten times greater than those of any of the Babylonians (1:20). The source of this excellence is God alone (1:17; cf. 2:23, 28, 47). The excellence of God and the superiority of God's gifts is a theme that runs throughout the compilation of tales and the entire book of Daniel. The introduction of the four Judeans together here allows for cohesion among the tales even when one or more of the four are missing (Daniel is absent from Dan 3; his three companions do not play prominent roles except in Dan 3). Likewise, the mention of Daniel's gift of discernment of visions and dreams prepares for his exercise of this ability

not only in the tales but also in the visionary chapters which follow (Dan 7–12). Finally, the note that Daniel's career continued until the accession of Cyrus (1:21) finds its parallel, forming an *inclusio*, at the close of the tales in 6:29 [6:28 Eng.].

1.2 *Daniel 1:8–16*

The simplicity of the tale of the food rejection in Daniel 1:8–16 belies its crucial significance. Daniel faces a problem. He does not want to "defile" himself with the king's food and wine. He asks a favor of the chief officer (lit., "eunuch"), who protests that the haggard look of those who do not partake of the king's fare would jeopardize his own position (lit., his "head," taken as a genuinely life-and-death concern by many [e.g., Goldingay 1989:19–20; Collins 1993:144; Smith-Christopher 1996:42] but not all [e.g., Montgomery 1927:131]). Daniel then proposes to "the overseer whom the chief officer had appointed over Daniel" and his companions (1:11; generally believed not to be Ashpenaz but a different, lesser, official [see Montgomery 1927:131; Collins 1993:144]) that they be tested for ten days to see whether they would indeed suffer without the king's food and wine. The test is agreed to, the Judeans flourish, and the overseer continues to replace their allotment of the king's food and wine with vegetables and water.

While most commentators recognize that this story demonstrates a form of Judean piety that is concerned to observe the regulations of kosher diet (even if Daniel's action here goes beyond that required by Levitical law [see Collins 1993:141–43]), I submit that there is much more at stake here and that the rejection of food symbolizes a more comprehensive rejection of Babylonian tradition. Sibley Towner (1984:24–26) follows Joyce Baldwin (1978:82–83) in seeking a reason for Daniel's concern beyond that of simple dietary restriction. They point in the right direction by recognizing that to share the king's food is to symbolize commitment to the king.

> It would seem that Daniel rejected this symbol of dependence on the king because he wished to be free to fulfil his primary obligations to the God he served. The defilement he feared was not so much a ritual as a moral defilement, arising from the subtle flattery of gifts and favours which entailed hidden implications of loyal support, however dubious the king's future policies might prove to be. (Baldwin 1978:83)

The employment of an explicit social science model helps to ground this suggestion as well as push it further to claim that Daniel rejected the king's education in addition to the king's food.

2 *The Model*

2.1 *For Reading Daniel 1:1–7, 17–21*

For our reading of the introductory material in Daniel 1, it is sufficient to recall a few of the dynamics outlined in the model of honor sketched above in Chapter One. In the taxonomy of honor, anthropologists have made a distinction between ascribed and achieved honor. Ascribed honor belongs to one because of one's family or because it is bestowed by a person of status and power. Achieved honor is acquired by demonstrating excellence in a way that commands the respect of others. Further, honor is replicated by name. The Bible's use of (sometimes extensive) genealogies reflects the significance that family name bears in the ancient world. Along with this, recall the dynamic of collective honor: the Judeans in the foreign court were not interacting principally as individuals but as members of a group. Finding themselves in a context that was potentially hostile because it was dominated by others who were not of their *ethnos*, the Judeans carried a heightened responsibility to preserve the honor of their group. The dynamics of the patron-client relationship play a role as well. Humanity's relationship to God was conceived in terms of this well-known social relationship—God is the ultimate patron (cf. Malina 1998d:151; Moxnes 1991:257).

2.2 *For Reading Daniel 1:8–16*

For our reading of the tale of the food rejection, it is necessary to expand upon the insight that a concern for purity and pollution results in maps of persons, places, times, and things. The use of food, diet, and eating as the vehicle for the message of Daniel 1 is surely no mere accident. Rather, it evokes an entire social system that lies at the very heart of an honor culture. The maps of persons, places, times, and things define the "symbolic universe" of a group (Neyrey 1991b). What role can meals possibly play in this concern for hierarchy and boundaries? Meals function not as rituals, which are events that

facilitate the changing of roles and statuses, but rather as ceremonies, which confirm roles and statuses within a group (see Neyrey 1991a:361–363; Malina 1998b). "Meals-as-ceremonies replicate the group's basic social system, its values, lines, classifications, and its symbolic world" (Neyrey 1991a:363). Therefore meals play a role in confirming and reinforcing the group's perception of the world's boundaries and hierarchies (Douglas 1972; cf. Corley 1993, esp. 19–21), that is, the maps of persons, places, times, and things.

Purity and pollution is the broad concept under which to understand these social maps. From an anthropologist's perspective, the idea of purity is a social construct that provides categories and structures that a society uses to understand and classify the world. Neyrey provides a survey and summary of the anthropological study of the idea of purity with special attention given to the value of this concept for understanding biblical texts (1996; cf. 1991b:274–89). He notes that Mary Douglas (1966) has provided the foundational understanding of the function of purity in Jewish and Christian literature. The Priestly account of creation in Genesis 1 provides the paradigm upon which is based "a cultural perception of order—proper space, proper behavior, proper diet, and so on" (Neyrey 1996:88). For example, Leviticus 11 is one of a number of passages in that book which provides native classifications of "clean" and "unclean." In this case, animals are dealt with, and the result is a map of things. The map provides a major distinction between clean and unclean; further development by the rabbis included a hierarchy within those major categories (see Neyrey 1996:91–92). The criteria by which the clean (e.g., goats) are divided from the unclean (e.g., swine) are specified (Lev 11:3—cloven hoof, ruminant) and are based on God's intention for the created order, grounded in the divine will (Lev 11:1–2) (see the extensive discussion by Milgrom [1991:691–727], including significant refinements to Douglas's original treatment). Meals, then, become the occasion to substantiate this understanding of the world by observing these classifications and eating only those animals that are "clean."

Thus, meals communicate. By reflecting the symbolic world of a group, that is, by proceeding according to the shared understandings of "the way the world was structured and operated" (Neyrey 1991b:272)—its boundaries, structures, and hierarchies—meals communicate a microcosm of the larger system. "Food categories therefore encode social events" (Douglas 1972:61). There are many levels at which meals communicate and replicate social maps. Leviticus 11

(cf. Deut 14) is an example of a map of things, and a meal that observes the boundaries of that map, by including "clean" foods and excluding "unclean" foods, affirms that map and provides cohesiveness among the group that lives by it. Purity also involves a map of persons. Meals in the ancient world regularly reflected such a map by structuring the various aspects of the meal to reflect hierarchies of status (cf. Malina 1998b). The primary distinction falls between those who are invited and participate as opposed to those on the outside, who do not share in the meal. As would be expected of an occasion which functions to strengthen a group's boundaries, likes eat with likes; "people basically eat with others with whom they share values" (Neyrey 1991a:364). Among those at the meal, furthermore, there is a ranking reflected in roles (host, chief guest, servants, etc.), seating position (head of the table, right hand of the host, etc.), as well as kinds and amounts of food received (Neyrey 1991a:364–65). Further, a map of places regulates the place where a meal is held. Some places are more honorable (e.g., in a temple) while others are less honorable (e.g., outside the city in a field). As just mentioned, the seating arrangement at a meal reflects a division of space into more honorable (e.g., near the host and guest of honor) and less honorable places (Neyrey 1991a:366). Finally, there is a map of times. Regulated here is not only the proper time to hold a meal but also the proper order for serving the courses of the meal. Recall the disputes over calendars in Second Temple Judaism (see VanderKam 1998) and in the early church; at stake was the proper timing of festivals and meals (Passover, Easter, etc.). The events at the meal are also regulated according to the proper times for washing, drinking, eating (which course? when?), and so on (Neyrey 1991a:366–67).

For reading Daniel 1, we need to attend to one final aspect of meals. Not only is food regulated by a map of things but so too is speech. Certain topics are appropriate for conversation while others are not, and some meals require specific talk (e.g., benedictions, recitations like that of the Exodus story at Passover) (Neyrey 1991a:365). Indeed, speech came to be symbolized by food in the biblical tradition. Neyrey provides a number of examples, including the banquet served by Lady Wisdom to the simple and undiscerning "(Prov 9:1–6), symbolizing how she instructs them and feeds them with the words of truth" (1991a:365–66; cf. McKinlay 1999). When Daniel refuses the king's food, he does not simply demonstrate a concern for purity by respecting the Judean tradition's map of persons and refusing to

share a meal with foreigners. Daniel's refusal of commensality also symbolizes a refusal of the forced acculturation. Concern over the boundaries of the physical body (e.g., rejecting food) serves as a microcosm for the larger concern over the boundaries of the social body (e.g., rejecting foreign education). Indeed, the ability of food to symbolize speech makes a tale about the refusal of commensality especially effective for communicating more than it says. When Daniel 1 is read with a sensitivity to this symbolism, we discover that the tale of the food rejection involves not simply the rejection of certain food but the refusal of an entire social system, specifically embodied in "the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (Dan 1:4).

3 *The Reading*

3.1 *Daniel 1:1–7*

We now have the tools necessary to revisit Daniel 1 with our ears attuned to those items which reflect its cultural patterns and which would have resonated with a second-century BCE Judean audience. The situation that audience faced can be defined broadly by exile and diaspora and specifically by foreign occupation in Judea and the persecution suffered under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (brief descriptions of which are available from numerous sources, e.g., Harrington 1988; Grabbe 1992:276–85; Schäfer 1995:35–44; Sacchi 2000:223–49; VanderKam 2001:18–24). The loss of self-rule that characterizes such a situation (whether of exile, diaspora, or foreign occupation) raises the fundamental question of ultimate sovereignty. Who really rules the world? Ralph Klein notes that Israel's loss of the temple in the exile calls God's own self into question: "Either there were deities stronger than or superior to Yahweh, or for some reason Yahweh had rejected his own people and his own place" (1979:3–4). Norman Whybray characterizes the crisis as one of disillusionment of the exiles based on the same two concerns. "They had lost faith in Yahweh in two respects: they no longer believed that he was *willing* to help them; nor, even more serious, that he was *able* to do so" (1975:32–33, emphasis his). When Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempted to abolish Judean religious practice in the mid-second century, these same questions and concerns surely arose, making their sixth-century poignancy especially fitting for rehearsal (cf. Dan 3:17).

In the terms of our social-scientific model, God was perceived as

a patron with a special relationship to this chosen client, Israel (cf. Malina 1988b). Klein lists the favors that the Patron-God had provided: the temple, the promise of an eternal Davidic dynasty, land and descendants, the Sinai covenant (1979:4–5). And of course the response of the client-Israel is one of "doxology and trust" (see the chapter by this title in Miller 1994:178–232). Commitment is given to God in the form of praise and loyalty. God should, therefore, be *willing* to help Israel. As reflected in Israel's praise of God as the Most High and the Almighty, God should be *able* to help them. Such is God's reputation, but the crisis of exile cast a shadow of doubt across the relationship. T. R. Hobbs captures the problem well: "The 'shame' of Israel/Judah in exile, which is also widely acknowledged by the nations who mock the exiles (1 Kgs 9:7; Pss 44:13; 79:4; 137:7–8; Jer 24:9; Ezek 5:15; Mic 2:4), is a result of their Patron *par excellence*, Yahweh, not being able to sustain his clients" (1997:503). When these two fundamental aspects—God's willingness and God's ability—are called into question, it signals a crisis of honor for God. What kind of patron reneges on the duties to a client? Is God's reputation for power and sovereignty really a façade to cover impotence?

The phraseology of Daniel 1:1–2 addresses precisely this matrix of concern. Verse 1 reads like a simple report of bare facts: in such-and-such a year (a notoriously problematic date is given [see Collins 1993:130–33]) Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and besieged it. Likewise, the second half of verse 2 carries a similar journalistic tone, again with Nebuchadnezzar as the subject, the active agent: he brought away with him vessels from the house of God. Verse 2 opens, however, with a very different kind of statement. Nebuchadnezzar is practically absent from view (reduced to a possessive pronoun, "into *his* hand," which is a single letter in Hebrew, בידו). God is the subject, the active agent. God acted to give the Judean king into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. There is no divine impotence here. Jerusalem did not fall because Nebuchadnezzar or his gods were stronger than the God of Jerusalem; rather, Jerusalem fell only because God gave it into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Thus the compiler is already at work shaping the rhetoric to reverse what appears to be the loss of divine power into an exercise of the same. God is not dishonored by these events, but rather the audience should accord honor to God, who is actively wielding God's rightful power. This simple construction implicitly introduces one of the main themes of

these tales—God's ultimate sovereignty (note the title of Fewell's reading of Daniel 1–6, *Circle of Sovereignty* [1988]; see also Seow 2003a:14, 20–21). Though the book of Daniel seems not to wrestle with the question of why the exile occurred, it does seem to point to loyal clientage as the clear responsibility of the Judeans.

Daniel 1:3–7 performs two functions. These verses introduce the protagonists of the tales, and they provide the setting for the story of the food rejection. Before anything specific about the main characters is mentioned, general categories are invoked: royalty and nobility, without blemish, handsome (1:3–4). Commentators have worked to understand exactly what these categories refer to and how the words operate semantically and syntactically within the sentences. For example, the "royalty" and "nobility" of verse 3 are generally agreed to be further qualifiers of the chosen Israelites and thus not indicative of Babylonian royalty or nobility (e.g., Collins 1993:136–37; Montgomery 1927:119–20). What that discussion leaves aside, however, is the question of *why* royalty and nobility are specified at all; what role does that particularity of the narrative play in a second-century Judean audience's attempt to make sense of the story? Commentators even provide us with valuable information about parallels from other societies. So, for example, this concern voiced in the text as a Baby-lonian desire to choose only those who are "without blemish" and "handsome" (1:4) for the training required to serve in the Babylonian royal court finds an affirmation of verisimilitude in what historians know of Mesopotamian priestly and scribal practice (Collins 1993: 136–37; Koch 1986:43; Oppenheim 1977:81–82; for a literary parallel from a Mari letter, see Paul 2001:62–65). Even that does not yet reveal *why* this was a concern, only that it was widespread and pervasive in the ancient Near East. Insights from social-scientific criticism, however, begin to shed some light on how the inclusion of this cultural information affects the reading and understanding of this tale.

As the text introduces the protagonists, we observe the categories of honor that are evoked. The text provides information about the protagonists that emphasizes their status in ways that would be easily recognized by a second-century BCE Judean audience. Recall the categories of the *encomium*: birth and origin, nurture and training, and accomplishments (including deeds of the body, deeds of the soul, and deeds of fortune) (see Chapter One, 3.1.8). With these categories in mind, we hear the description of the protagonists with a better

understanding of the cultural cues the text evokes to reflect their honor. The qualities specified in Daniel 1:3 as desirable by the king—royal and noble lineage—designate the birth and origin of the Judeans who were chosen. They descend from honorable lines, the best families, the most praiseworthy of backgrounds.

The category of nurture and training is addressed in two different ways. On the one hand, the text mentions characteristics of the youths that derive from their nurture and training. Menander Rhetor instructs us about the ancients' desire for "love of learning"; one is praised in the *encomium* "if he excels in literature, philosophy, and knowledge of letters" (2.371.17–372.2, from Russell and Wilson 1981:82–83; see Malina and Neyrey 1996:27–28). So, for example, the Judean youths are described as intelligent, understanding, and discerning (Dan 1:4). Goldingay suggests that the four have already received a Judean aristocrat's education, that they are "well-versed in the practical learning embodied in a book such as Proverbs" (1989:15–16). On the other hand, the foreign king's effort to enslave these youths—these Judean exiles—in *his* service requires their "social death" (Patterson 1982), an operation that entails a number of transitional phases (see Meillassoux 1975:11–26). Slaves are first removed from their native milieu. This removal occurs not only physically but also socially, as their identity is stripped from them and they lose all ties of kinship and community, all those things that constitute their being, their social existence. Slaves are then introduced into their overlord's world, but they are introduced as nonbeings. They are socially dead; they have no social existence outside their service to the overlord (Patterson 1982:38). The first phase, which Orlando Patterson calls "natal alienation" (1982:5–9, 51–62), is depicted in the text of Daniel by the changing of the Judean youths' names (1:7). The second phase, the incorporation of the subjects into the new world, is to be effected by the forced course of education into the "literature and language of the Chaldeans" (1:4). In the terminology of the *encomium*, the Judean youths were to receive a *new* nurture and training. Note, too, that the nurture is not only tied explicitly to the proposed course of education but also symbolized by the king's provision of food and wine (1:5).

The category of accomplishments includes actions: deeds of the body, deeds of the soul, and deeds of fortune. According to Aristotle, deeds of the body are "health, beauty, strength, physical stature, athletic prowess" (*Rhet.* 1.5.4; see further at 1.5.10–14). The Judean youths

are described in Daniel 1:4 as "without blemish" and "handsome"; that is, they exhibit the beauty which is praiseworthy among the deeds of the body. Deeds of the soul are typically expressed in terms of the four classical virtues, whose Greek names elicit a variety of English translations: δικαιοσύνη (justice, righteousness), ἀνδρεία (courage), φρόνησις (wisdom, prudence), σωφροσύνη (temperance, self-control). The tales of Daniel 1–6 find Daniel and his companions exhibiting each of these virtues, all of which we can recognize even in the absence of the Greek terminology, because the rhetorical tradition has preserved explicit descriptions of the contents of each (see esp. Neyrey 1998c:106–23). Deeds of fortune, finally, are the external components that attend to one's life. Though it is surely a misfortune to find oneself forcibly removed into exile, one's response to the circumstances of life are just as telling for the audience's evaluation of this category. Such external events would be perceived not as the result of mere chance but rather as the product of one's connection to the divine, who could favor one with patronage (Malina and Neyrey 1996:31). In Daniel's case, these tales find him winning great honor precisely by virtue of his relationship to the Judean God. Daniel builds an enviable reputation as one who has "friends in high places," as the contemporary English saying goes. Daniel is recognized—by no less than the foreign kings themselves—as enjoying unique connections with "the holy god(s)" (Dan 4:5–6, 15 [4:8–9, 18 Eng.]; 5:11, 14). Because of a background of noble birth and accomplishment, these youths are selected as capable of service in the court of the king, a service for which they lack but one thing—a new education in the foreign tradition.

Thus the king orders that they receive training in the literature and language of the Chaldeans (Dan 1:4). Nurtured by the masters of that tradition, they would be socialized into its social expectations and cultural code. While this would make them more than fit for service at the foreign king's court, it would also compromise their identity as Judeans, jeopardizing their patron-client relationship to the Judean God and soiling their own reputations by suggesting that they no longer exercise the virtue of righteousness which is entailed in such loyalty. Scholars are in general agreement that "the language and literature of the Chaldeans" indicates not so much the general literature of the ethnic group known as "Chaldeans," whose language was Aramaic, but rather the voluminous omen literature written in Akkadian and studied by Babylonian sages for use in soothsaying, divination, dream interpretation, etc. (Collins 1993:137–39; Charles

1929:13–16; Montgomery 1927:120–22; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:129). To turn to this cultural deposit as a source of education and identity, to learn its ways and practice its specialties, is to turn away from the Judean heritage as a source for education and identity. These terms are certainly the ones in which the authors of the books of the Maccabees paint the crisis faced by second-century Judeans, and an audience conscious of those dynamics could easily find its own situation reflected here in this tale from the book of Daniel. Whether it was rhetorically an over-simplification to pit Judaism as "Good" against Hellenism as "Evil," the authors of the Maccabean literature certainly reflected upon their situation in these terms. They perceived a danger in Greek ways that was to be resisted at all costs (see 1 Macc 1:11–15, 62–64; 2 Macc 4:7–17, 6:18–31; see further below, Chapter Six, §2).

Despite the evidence from the books of the Maccabees, commentators who place the book of Daniel in a Hellenistic context typically refuse to see in Daniel 1–6 anything other than a positive portrait of foreign kings and courts (e.g., Collins 1984:72–73; Collins 1993:33, 143; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:13). In an attempt to explain why Daniel balks only at the food in his context of subjugation, Goldingay makes the astounding claim that "accepting the palace provision involves a compromise of faith in a way that accepting a share in its life, its work, its education, and its names do not" (1989:24–25)! Goldingay provides no clue by which to understand Daniel's action, why it is that after "military defeat, geographical displacement, and cultural 'flooding' " it is only "at Babylonian food he draws the line" (24). Daniel Smith-Christopher is rare among recent commentators in his recognition of a more thoroughgoing *resistance* portrayed in the book of Daniel (1996:26–33; cf. 2001).

> Such an assumption about the benign rulers of either Babylon or Persia overlooks many of the significant symbols of domination that are indicated in the stories themselves—threats of death from the king, fear of the king's rage, name changing as a sign of subordination, symbolic warfare in the visions, etc. Thus that assumption fails to appreciate fully the themes of resistance and opposition that are major aspects of these stories. (1996:28)

As a social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6 makes clear, it is not the case that Daniel objects only to the king's food and not to any other of the king's tools of subjugation.

The whole situation in which Daniel and his companions find themselves is one of threat and potential conflict. For example, although

different societies agreed that loyalty to the traditions of one's *ethnos* is considered an exercise in the virtue of righteousness (or justice; see Neyrey 1998c:108–14; Malina 1998d:154), conflict nevertheless results when the traditions of two opposing groups direct their loyalties in opposite directions. Today we might characterize this as religious conflict, but we must recall that kinship and politics were the only two explicit domains in the ancient world. Religion, economics, and other areas that function as explicit domains in Western society today were, in the ancient world, embedded in the two explicit domains of kinship and politics (Hanson and Oakman 1998:5, 20, 196; Malina 1986c). Malina explains how religion is embedded in kinship and politics:

> By *respect* I mean the attitude one must have and the behavior one is expected to follow relative to those who control one's existence. This attitude and subsequent behavior was traditionally called "religion" by people in the Mediterranean world well into the sixteenth century. Bible translations call this attitude "piety," and sometimes "fear." For example, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10) actually refers to respect for the Lord. Respect is due to those who control our existence. When you were a child, who had immediate control of your existence? Parents. Who had control of their existence? Grandparents. Who presently controls both you and your parents and grandparents? Various local, state, and national government officials; various employers; and the wealthy in the halls of power. And who controls all these? Who is at the top of the ladder? The one who holds it all together, our God or gods. Now, the proper attitudes of respect and homage, along with the behavior you are expected to follow in relation to those who controlled and control your existence, is what this respect is all about. It is also what "religion" was about in the first-century New Testament world. (2001a:30)

In a context where this ladder-like structure is a common perception and where righteousness or piety, in these terms, is the grounds for praise, there can nevertheless be different understandings of *who* stands *where* on the rungs of this ladder. The fact that the Judeans and the Babylonians were each of a different *ethnos* led them to revere distinct lines of kinship. The traditions of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses and David, were not respected by the Babylonians, who had their own set of venerable ancestors. And of course, "the one who holds it all together" was different in each tradition; the God of the Judeans specifically forbade the kinds of divination that lay at the heart of the Babylonian tradition (Deut 18:9–14; Charles 1929:15).

To respect this Judean God properly was to reject the Babylonian tradition entirely. Notice again the role played by politics and kinship, the explicit domains in which religion is embedded.

> Persons would perceive a mismatch between professed values and social experience . . . if one were a professed believer in some ethnic deity [e.g., the God of the Judeans] yet lacked the traditional ethnic polity [i.e., politics] and domestic setting [i.e., kinship] in which to experience the deity's benevolence and with which to demonstrate due respect. This was the problem of foreign domination in Palestine. . . . [D]evotedness to some ethnic deity without power left one vulnerable to the requirements of respect and allegiance demanded by the deities presiding over the controlling political system. (Malina 1986c:93)

Whether in a setting of exile, diaspora, or foreign occupation of the homeland, faithfulness to the Judean God "left one vulnerable" in the conflict arising from demands of faithfulness to the party in power, be it Babylon (in the case of Daniel), Egypt (in the case of Joseph in Genesis), Persia and later the Greek Ptolemies and Seleucids (the latter in the case of the proposed second-century Judean audience of the book of Daniel), or Rome (in the case of Jesus and his contemporaries). Thus, even within a shared understanding of honorable behavior, the distinct contents of the two traditions led to an inevitable conflict between those who were loyal to one and those loyal to the other. A choice must be made, and the tale of the food rejection symbolizes the fundamental choice made by the Judeans—they reject the Babylonian education and its divinatory arts. The tales of Daniel 1–6 narrate the exiles' "experience [of] the deity's benevolence" and their risky resolve to "demonstrate due respect." They demonstrate respect not to their supposedly benign or sympathetic foreign subjugators, but to the Judean God. Will their loyalty to their God be honored and vindicated by their God? To the extent that the tales offer a positive answer to this question, they function not simply to record a faithful response to a difficult period in Judean history, but they function to persuade and encourage the same faithful response in the present difficult period of persecution in the mid-second century under Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

The narrative moves immediately to the means by which the commitment of the Judeans and the power of God will be tested. Daniel 1:5 combines the king's order to "nurture" the youths for three years with the king's allotment of his own food and drink to them. Thus training and eating are combined into a single process designed to

resocialize the Judeans (Matthews and Benjamin perceptively recognize this as "indoctrination" [1993:170]) into the Babylonian tradition. Daniel 1:6–7 places the capstone on this attempted transformation by stripping the Judeans of their very names, the symbols of their blood-ties to the Judean tradition, the God of their ancestors, and the royal line. The names of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are forcibly removed, and the Babylonian official replaces them with new Babylonian names: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The meanings of some of the two sets of names are unclear and often disputed (Collins 1993:140–41), but those that are known and some of the plausible suggestions for the others indicate the shift of loyalty involved in the change, as if the clients of one patron now become the clients of another (see Figure 2). Anthropologists have alerted us to the way in which names replicate honor, specifically by indicating kinship relations (Eickelman 1998:181; cf. Neyrey 1998c:55–59). The change of a name attempts to coerce a change of loyalty from one conception of the "ladder" of kinship and religious duty to another. Nebuchadnezzar voices this ancient perception when he relates that "finally Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, came in before me" (4:5 [4:8 Eng.]). Again employing the categories of the *encomium*, we observe that the Babylonian king attempts to transform the honorable Judeans into honorable Babylonians, complete with the imposition of new names that reflect a different descent (thus a new account of birth and origin) and preparation for new accomplishments as *his* clients, serving in *his* court, brought about by *his* provision of a new nurture and education.

Hebrew name	Hebrew meaning	Babylonian name	Babylonian meaning
Daniel	"God is my judge"	Belteshazzar	"Bel protect his life"
Hananiah	"Yahweh has acted graciously"	Shadrach	Marduk?
Mishael	"Who is what God is?"	Meshach	Marduk? Mithras?
Azariah	"Yahweh has helped"	Abednego	"servant of Nabu"

Figure 2. Change of relationship indicated by change of name in Daniel 1

3.2 *Daniel 1:8–16*

I have proposed that Daniel rejects this attempt by refusing the new education, although the text does not state this explicitly. Instead, Daniel 1 embodies the conflict of cultures with a tale about rich food and wine *vs.* vegetables and water (Dan 1:8–16). Of course, Danna Nolan Fewell reminds us that there is a "difference between what language *says* and what it *does*" (1988:29). The way in which this tale expresses a rejection of the education can be seen in three lines of evidence that the text provides. First, the presentation of Daniel throughout the tales explicitly relates a distinct source for Daniel's abilities—a source other than the king's new education; thus, the tales do not require that Daniel has accepted the education. Even though Daniel is depicted as having the ability to perform the same functions as those trained in the Babylonian divinatory arts, Daniel is distinguished from them by his unique source for the same (indeed, superior) abilities. Thus the text allows for readers to understand Daniel as having rejected the divinatory education—just as he rejected the food—and yet succeeding at the functions of the divinatory arts by means of a distinct method and source of power. Second, sensitivity to the rhetorical use of the *encomium* for the purposes of comparison allows this test of diets—an explicit comparison—to alert readers to a larger test, a greater comparison that is also present. Daniel 1 features representatives of Judean society being directly compared to representatives of Babylonian society. The rejection of the Babylonian food is representative of a rejection of the Babylonian education as well, thus allowing the Judean heritage to compete against the Babylonian apart from any mixing of the two. Third, sensitivity to the symbolism of food and the attendant cultural significance evoked by commensality allows readers to understand the language of the "diet" to *do* more than it *says*, namely, to function as a symbol for the entirety of the cultural heritage, including this attempt at forced acculturation through imperial education. Each of these three lines of evidence deserves further attention.

3.2.1 *Daniel and the Diviners*

First, quite apart from any social-scientific insight, a close reading reveals that nowhere in Daniel 1 nor in the other tales does the narrative specify that Daniel practices any of the Babylonian divinatory arts. With the exception of the general term "sages" (חכימין), which

sometimes includes Daniel (e.g., 2:13) but sometimes specifically excludes him (e.g., 2:27), none of the terms that are used to describe the Babylonian conjurers is used of Daniel. Daniel is not described as an exorcist (אשף, 1:20; 2:2, 10, 27; 4:4 [4:7 Eng.]; 5:7, 15; "one who recites incantations" [see Collins 1993:128–29]), nor a sorcerer (מכשף, 2:2), nor a diviner (גזר, 2:27, 4:4 [4:7 Eng.], 5:7), nor even a Chaldean (כשדים, 2:2, 4; כשדיא, 2:5, 10; 3:8; 4:4 [4:7 Eng.]; 5:7). Daniel is said to have been designated רב, "chief of" those known by these terms (5:11), but the narrator's voice is not the one who makes this identification—it is Belshazzar's queen who says that King Nebuchadnezzar thus appointed Daniel. In other words, the foreign audience clearly recognizes Daniel's ability to perform the services required of these various functionaries, but sympathetic Judean readers are aware that Daniel's success in these endeavors does not come from his superior ability to practice those foreign crafts but from his superior source of a different power to perform the same functions. Daniel is indeed רב חרטמין אשפין כשדין גזרין (5:11), for *his* abilities and their source—God—far exceed *their* abilities and their source—the Babylonian divinatory arts. It is entirely to be expected that Nebuchadnezzar would appoint Daniel as his chief officer in this area (see also 4:6 [4:9 Eng.], discussed below), because Daniel can achieve the desired results better than anyone else, but the text is clear to point out—just as Daniel clearly points out to the king (2:28, 30, 45)—that the source of his results is not divinatory skill but rather the God who provides for Daniel (1:17; 2:22–23, 47; 4:15 [4:18 Eng.]; 5:12, 14, 16). Daniel 2:48 describes it well, as Nebuchadnezzar gives Daniel authority as "chief *officer over* all the sages of Babylon" (רב סגנין על כל חכימי בבל).

Nor is Daniel called an "interpreter of dreams" (חרטם, 1:20; 2:2, 10, 27; 4:4 [4:7 Eng.]; also more generally "magician" [see Collins 1993:128]). Nebuchadnezzar once refers to Daniel as "chief of dream interpreters" (רב חרטמיא, 4:6 [4:9 Eng.]), but, again, that designation comes from the mouth of a foreign character whose primary concern is the result. Daniel is described as being able to interpret dreams (מפשר חלמין, 5:12), but this ability is mentioned specifically in contrast to the failure of the Babylonian diviners (5:8, 15); although it is absent in the MT, the texts of 4QDan[a], ms. 88, and the Syro-Hexapla include "dream interpreters" (חרטמיא, 4QDan[a] [DJD 16.249–50, pl. XXX]) in the list of failed Babylonians (5:7). Daniel's ability to interpret dreams, then, is set apart from that of the Babylonians, and we

thus understand that "the problem in Daniel . . . is resolved not so much by human ingenuity as by divine favor" (Collins 1993:249). Daniel is not a *better* dream interpreter, but Daniel has a *better source* for the interpretation of the dream. We do not have simply Daniel's abilities compared to the Babylonians' abilities; instead we have the *source* of Daniel's wisdom—the patronage of God—compared to the *source* of the Babylonians'—their training in divinatory arts.

Daniel 2 and Daniel 4 exemplify this difference between Daniel and the Babylonians in two distinct ways. In Daniel 2, the difference is apparent not in the specific labelling but rather in the explicit indication of the source of power and information. In Daniel 4, the difference is indicated by the use of labels, while the source of power and information is not made explicit. For the interpretation of his dream in Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar first calls "all the sages of Babylon" (כל חכימי בבל, 4:3 [4:6 Eng.]), who are specified as "dream interpreters, exorcists, Chaldeans, and diviners" (חרטמיא אשפיא כשדיא ונזריא, 4:4 [4:7 Eng.]). They all fail (4:4 [4:7 Eng.]). "Finally," Daniel comes, separated from the failed Babylonians not only temporally but also by the king's acknowledgment that Daniel possesses a "holy divine spirit" (רוח אלהין קדישין, 4:5 [4:8 Eng.]). On the one hand all the sages of Babylon, known by the designation of their specialty in divinatory arts, fail this test, while on the other hand Daniel, known by his unique possession of a "holy divine spirit," succeeds. The king repeats his emphasis upon this source of Daniel's power and knowledge when he addresses Daniel directly (4:6 [4:9 Eng.]). The king also reminds his hearers/the readers that Daniel has been named Belteshazzar "after the name of my god" (4:5 [4:8 Eng.]), and he addresses Daniel as "chief of dream interpreters" (רב חרטמיא, 4:6 [4:9 Eng.]), but these discordant elements of the story serve to heighten the readers' awareness of Daniel's distinction from the Babylonians—even as that distinction is not yet fully appreciated by the Babylonian king. Nebuchadnezzar uses Daniel's Babylonian name, but the narrative retains his Hebrew name, thereby reinforcing the fact that the Babylonian name was an ill-fitting label with only superficial significance, for Daniel remained loyal to his Judean heritage and his Patron-God. Likewise, even if Nebuchadnezzar thought of Daniel (Belteshazzar) as belonging to the same general category as his own Babylonian sages—"O Belteshazzar, chief of dream interpreters . . ." (4:6 [4:9 Eng.])—he nevertheless recognizes Daniel's possession of a distinctive source of power and knowledge—". . . of whom I know

that a holy divine spirit is in you" (4:6 [4:9 Eng.]). Further, readers again perceive the situation more clearly than does the king. Readers know from the other clues in the narrative that Daniel is not a dream interpreter like the Babylonians; thus, the designation as "chief of dream interpreters" serves not to include Daniel in that group but rather to set him apart from—superior to—them.

Daniel 2 makes the same point for the reader, but it employs a different strategy to do so. As in Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that he wants interpreted, and as before he calls "the dream interpreters, exorcists, sorcerers, and Chaldeans" (לחרטמים ולאשפים ולמכשפים ולכשדים, 2:2). Daniel is not explicitly listed, nor is his participation noted in the exchange which follows, wherein the king demands that the diviners first tell him his dream before interpreting it. This charge, they protest, is impossible, and the king responds with an order to kill "all the sages of Babylon" (כל חכימי בבל, 2:12). In this context, the narrative does include Daniel and his companions, though again the indication is that Daniel and his companions were considered *by the Babylonians* to belong to this group: "Daniel and his companions were sought for execution" along with the sages (2:13). Here we learn that Daniel had in fact been excluded from the previous gathering of Babylonian sages, for he requires Arioch's explanation of events and then seeks his own audience with the king, at which time he promises to interpret the dream (2:15–16, 24). Commentators have long noted these discrepancies in the text, but have been content to employ them as evidence of editing and the use of sources (e.g., Hartman and Di Lella 1978:139–53) rather than to inquire into the effect they have in "making sense" of the tales.

Daniel 2 goes on to make explicit the difference in the source of knowledge between Daniel and the Babylonians. Daniel contrasts, on the one hand, the "sages, exorcists, dream interpreters, and diviners" (חכימין אשפין חרטמין גזרין, 2:27) who cannot successfully employ their specialties of divination with, on the other hand, the "God in heaven who reveals [גלא] mysteries" (2:28). Daniel calls this God "the revealer [גלא] of mysteries" (2:29), and Daniel proclaims very explicitly the difference between his source of knowledge and the divinatory arts of the Babylonians. "As for me, it is not because of wisdom [בחכמה] that is in me beyond [מן; 4QDan^{a} reads יתירא, "in excess of" (Collins 1993:151; see DJD 16.244, pl. XXIX)] all living things that this mystery was revealed to me" (2:30). Thus Daniel's power and knowledge is not of the same category as that of the

Babylonians. Daniel does not succeed where they fail merely because he is better at what they do than they are; he does not do a better job of performing the same task. Rather, Daniel has rejected and thus does not employ the divinatory rites that go under the name of wisdom in the Babylonian tradition. Instead, Daniel appeals to a different source, to the God of his ancestors (2:23). This God provides for loyal clients what the Babylonian divinatory arts are designed to provide, but which its practitioners fail to produce. From this first line of evidence, it becomes clear that the narrative separates Daniel from the Babylonian sages, often by labelling (Daniel 4 and elsewhere) or by specifying a different source of knowledge (Daniel 2), such that Daniel cannot be understood as belonging to the categories of or properly identified with the various specialties of Babylonian divination. The God of the Judeans takes the place of the Babylonian arts, indoctrination into which Daniel rejects in Daniel 1.

3.2.2 *Explicit Comparison*

The second and third lines of evidence for this claim rely upon social-scientific analysis. Examination of the *encomium* has allowed us already to observe that the introduction of Daniel and his companions as well as the proposed three-year period of indoctrination are narrated according to the standard categories of nurture and training employed by an honor-conscious society to designate praise. We turn also to another part of that rhetorical form in order to investigate further the shape of the narrative of Daniel 1. It is a shape that is repeated throughout Daniel 1–6 and indeed forms the basic structure for the compilation as a whole. The rhetorical tradition reflected in the *progymnasmata* indicates that the "comparison" (σύγκρισις) can serve as an integral element of an *encomium* (see Chapter One, 3.1.8). It is by comparison that the qualities of one are shown to be superior to those of another. Taken as a whole, the tales of Daniel 1–6 comprise a comparison between the traditions of Babylonia and Judea. Daniel 1, as introduction to the compilation of tales, sets up this comparison in the way we have observed already: by introducing the characters by means of the categories of *encomium*. The comparison is exemplified in the tale of the food rejection (1:8–16), which tells a story that does more than it says. That is, the story depicts a comparison between a diet of king's food and wine and a diet of vegetables and water, a comparison between those who eat a diet of king's food and wine and those who eat a diet of vegetables and

water. Thus the element of comparison is explicitly brought the fore. And yet the elements being compared are more substantive that simply appetites and palates. The entire Judean heritage and the proper relationship to the Judean God is at stake, aptly symbolized by food (see Feeley-Harnik 1981:71–106). To the extent that it is correct to read all of Daniel 1–6 as a comparison between the Babylonian and Judean traditions, we find warrant to understand this comparison between diets as symbolizing and participating in—indeed, introducing readers to—that larger comparison between traditions.

3.2.3 *Comparing More than Diets*

Finally, the third line of evidence affirms this suggestion by the social-scientific means reviewed above (2.2). Namely, meals are an opportunity for the affirmation of the social map of things not only by the careful regulation of food but also by the careful regulation of speech. We observed that speech came to be symbolized by food in the biblical tradition (e.g., Prov 9:1–6) and beyond (Feeley-Harnik provides an extensive overview of the use of food to symbolize God's "word" in biblical, rabbinic, and other early Jewish literature [1981:71–106]). Observe the intricate relationship between food and talk in the elaborate banquets and conversations depicted, with much attention to honor, in the *Letter of Aristeas* (esp. 172–300; cf. Zuntz 1959). The ability of food and meals to confirm or disrupt social order was so commonly held that the example of food was often used to symbolize a confirmation or disruption of social order on a scale much larger than simply the table. For example, Peter learns in Acts 10–11 not to make a distinction between Jews and Gentiles (see Neyrey 1991a:380–81). Peter does not learn this lesson directly, however. His understanding that "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34) is driven home first in the context of clean and unclean foods. After Peter's vision of a sheet with both "clean" and "unclean" animals—all of which were offered as food by God, who explicitly declared them all clean (Acts 10:15)—Peter applies the lesson to his meeting with the Gentile centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:28). Peter readily understands that a new map of things (i.e., foods) evokes also a new map of persons. So in Daniel 1, readers are prepared to understand that Daniel's actions with regard to his diet involve a great deal more than his choice of foods. For Peter, acceptance of food translated into an acceptance of persons. For Daniel, rejection of the imperial food communicates a rejection of the imperial edu-

cation, the king's attempt to alienate Daniel from his native tradition and replace it with a foreign one. By rejecting the king's food and wine, Daniel rejects the king's training and education in the Babylonian tradition.

With such an understanding of the role that the tale of the food rejection plays in this first chapter, we can affirm that it inaugurates the structure of comparison that prevails throughout the compilation (Dan 1–6). If Daniel's rejection of the king's provision of food replicates a rejection of the king's provision of education (and hence, forced acculturation), then the test of the results of the diet (1:11–16) replicates a test of the results of the two forms of cultural heritage. How would the Judean tradition fare in comparison and competition with the dominant Babylonian tradition? The Babylonian official mentioned in Daniel 1:10 naturally despaired of the success of the Judeans' diet (hence also of their tradition). And yet in the end their diet left them "better and fatter" than those on the king's diet (1:15). Readers of the compilation discover that this is the first of many instances of Judean superiority narrated in the subsequent tales.

Daniel 1 therefore serves well as the opening chapter of the compilation of Daniel 1–6 by both introducing the material in the compilation and providing grounds for unity and cohesion in the book. In this single chapter, all the characters and settings employed in the following tales are already in view, and the comparison of the Babylonian tradition rooted in loyalty to the king and dependent upon divinatory arts with the Judean tradition rooted in loyalty to God and dependent upon God's provision is well-established through the simple and succinct story of the food rejection.

3.3 *Daniel 1:17–21*

Daniel 1 does not end without making explicit both the initial results of the comparison and the source of Daniel's success, the Judeans' Patron-God. Unbeknown to the king, some youths were socialized into the Babylonian arts while Daniel and his companions rejected that training in favor of continued loyalty to their Judean heritage. At the end of the prescribed period, the king finds that "none of the others were like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah" (1:19; note the narrator's use of their native Judean names). When compared with the other candidates, the four Judeans excel over all those trained in the Babylonian tradition. Daniel and his companions are

therefore chosen to serve in the royal court, where further comparison—and competition—with the Babylonian specialists finds the Judeans superior, indeed "ten times better than [עשר ידות על] all the dream interpreters and exorcists in his whole kingdom" (1:20). If they had rejected the Babylonian training, however, how could Daniel and his companions perform so well? The narrative makes clear that "God gave these four youths knowledge and proficiency in all literature and wisdom [מדע והשכל בכל ספר וחכמה]" and that Daniel "had insight [הבין] into all dreams and visions" (1:17) (Seow rightly emphasizes God's provision [2003a:27–29] but continues to assume that "Daniel accepted and endured the [king's] training" [2003a:26; cf. 2003b:358–59]). God indeed honors the loyalty of these clients, and their rejection of the Babylonian tradition—a decision that was resisted by the Babylonians—is vindicated by God in the provision of even greater honor (see Figure 3).

The king sought to enhance by means of Babylonian education:	Daniel 1:4	Daniel 1:17	God provided, for loyalty to Judean heritage, not by Babylonian education:
"proficient in (all) . . .	משכילים	השכל	"proficiency in (all lit. and) . . .
. . . wisdom	חכמה	חכמה	. . . wisdom
well-informed	ידעי דעת	מדע	knowledge
insightful"	מביני מדע	הבין	insight"

Figure 3. Judeans excel in comparison, by God's provision

4 *Summary*

The reading of Daniel 1 given here has made use of the anthropological model of honor to note two important ways in which this opening chapter of the compilation functions. In a context of cultural crisis, which is equally a crisis of honor for God, the narrative affirms that God performs as an *able* Patron—powerful, sovereign, and active. The immediate activity of foreign kingdoms operates only and ever as a derivative function of the ultimate activity of God (Goldingay 1989:57; cf. Koch 1961:25–32). God is likewise *willing* to continue to provide for faithful clients. By rejecting the Babylonian

tradition, God's clients demonstrate their loyalty to God and the Judean heritage (exercising their virtue of righteousness), and their choice is indeed vindicated by God, who provides abundantly for them. Their honor is vindicated, as also God's honor is vindicated. God has not reneged on the duties of a Patron, and neither should the clients of this Patron-God be negligent in their duties in return.

Daniel 1 serves not only to compare the Judean tradition with a foreign, dominating tradition in order to demonstrate the superiority of the former, but the chapter also serves thereby to encourage Judean readers to maintain their identity and their loyalty to the Judean heritage and the Judean God. The particular Judean audience we have in mind is the community suffering under the oppression of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the mid-second century BCE. The cultural crisis perceived under those conditions pitted the Hellenistic tradition as a competitor and threat to that of the Judeans. The book of 2 Maccabees laments the introduction of "new customs contrary to the law," the establishment of a *gymnasium*, and inducement to the "noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat" (2 Macc 4:11–12 NRSV). Jonathan Goldstein captures the connotations of subjugation with his translation: "the education of the noblest adolescent boys consist[ed] of submission to the broad-brimmed Greek hat" (Goldstein 1983:217; see his comment on the word-play involved, ὑποτάσσων ὑπὸ πέτασον, [1983:229]).

> There was such an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways . . . that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar. Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus-throwing, disdaining the honors prized by their ancestors and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige. (2 Macc 4:13–15 NRSV)

It is to those who are being lured to the Greek heritage that the tales of Daniel speak a word of caution. This first chapter says to them that they are giving up the better for the worse. Further, this first chapter urges them not to adopt these foreign ways but to resist them, refuse them, reject them.

The story of Daniel not only presents a favorable comparison of the Judean heritage to the foreign heritage, but it also models an example of resistance, refusal, and rejection. The tale of Daniel's food rejection takes on much grander proportions than the simple

matter of a kosher diet. At stake is nothing less than the fundamental issues of group identity, worldview, and traditional heritage. The loss of land, loss of self-rule, loss of temple-based connection to the ancestral God, even the loss of their Hebrew names, all mark these Judeans as an enslaved people. Smith-Christopher is sensitive to the sometimes subtle dynamics of subjugation at work not only in the Babylonian exile but under Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the mid-second century as well. His treatment is worth quoting at length.

> In his book *Slavery and Social Death*, Orlando Patterson analyzes the structure of slave societies using data from over forty different slave systems from all over the world and in different times. Common to all is the significance of *symbolic* institutions, what Patterson calls "the symbolic whips of slavery . . . woven from many areas of culture" [1982:8]. These symbols include forceable name changes, hair or clothing changes, body markers, and anything that symbolized the death of one's identity at birth by means of a "rebirth" to a new identity given by the dominant authorities. Patterson notes that in different slave systems, a slave may be forced to change his or her name or "eat" the old identity through a food ceremony. Hence, according to Patterson's analysis, slavery is, in essence, the removal of one's identity and a social death. Therefore, the reconstruction and resistance of an ethnic group can be seen as a potential response to just such a threat of social death. One of the ways we see Jewish resistance to the symbols of powerlessness in the exile and afterward is in the telling of stories of Jewish courage in the face of tremendous foreign power. The tales of the book of Daniel are stories and writings of this kind. (Smith-Christopher 1996:31)

In the Babylonian setting of Daniel 1, we find precisely the aspects of domination outlined by Patterson (see esp. 1982:35–76). The Judeans face forcible name changes as a part of Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to substitute a Babylonian identity for their Judean identity (Dan 1:7). The socialization into this new identity is to be completed by a course of "education" (Dan 1:4). Facing such circumstances, resistance takes the form of refusal—Daniel refuses the king's food, and in that gesture we understand that Daniel refuses this attempt by the Babylonians to force him to "eat" his old identity by accepting a substitute source of nurture and nourishment.

It is surely no coincidence that these tales of the Judeans under forced Babylonian acculturation found their way into a book that circulated in the second century BCE, when "education" again becomes a battleground in a new cultural war (see Doran 2001). This time it is the Hellenistic *gymnasium* (for its role in Greek education, see Tomlinson

1996) that is the source of a loss of identity and a dishonoring of the Judean relationship with God. The telling of Daniel's story attempts to identify the encroachment of Hellenistic ways not as a positive change in the times, not a progressive development for social and political advancement, but rather as a subtle form of enslavement, a social death that is no less real because of its superficial allure. Daniel refused to cooperate with this loss of heritage, and the telling of Daniel's story provides a model for a similar refusal under different circumstances.

What is wrong with participating in the Hellenistic life of the *gymnasium*? Why not leave the boring old temple rituals for the exciting new wrestling events (2 Macc 4:13–15)? In short, such behavior dishonors the kinship-based patron-client relationship that has developed between the Judeans and their God in favor of a new patron, the apparent might and alluring treasures of a foreign culture. But the tales of Daniel provide an antidote to that appeal, as well. In the comparison of the Judean heritage and the Judean provider—the Patron-God Yahweh—with the foreign heritage (be it Babylonian or Hellenistic), one quickly discovers that the foreign tradition cannot fulfill its promises. Indeed, the Judean God provides what the foreign tradition values, and the Judean God does so with greater quantity and higher quality. In Daniel 1, God provides for the Judean youths (1:17) just what the Babylonian king seeks (1:4) (see above, Figure 3), and God does so "ten times better than" the Babylonian means are able to (1:20).

The tale of Daniel 1—indeed all of Daniel 1–6—sustains a great comparison. The concept is incorporated explicitly with Daniel's request that the Judeans be tested against their foreign counterparts (1:12). The theme is so pervasive that English translations intuitively emphasize it. "Compare," pleads Daniel in the Jewish Publication Society's new translation, "compare our appearance with that of the youths who eat of the king's food" (1:13 NJPS). Even when the potential cost seems great, in such harsh circumstances as those that prevailed under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, loyalty to God is still encouraged and acted upon. Despite Nebuchadnezzar's apparent victory in political and military matters, the loss of self-rule is not a mark of dishonor but instead occasions the opportunity for deeds of honor both on the part of God—who *does* perform well as Patron and who *does* provide for those who are loyal—and on the part of the Judeans. For example, their excellence in the court and their loyalty to their

ancestral tradition is praiseworthy activity, and the narrative serves to encourage such loyalty in other situations of exile, diaspora, and foreign domination. The vindication by the Judean Patron-God of the loyalty of faithful clients is tied to the success of the comparison between the Judean and the Babylonian traditions. This comparison clearly favors the Judean tradition, at the top of whose ladder is the God of heaven (2:19).

CHAPTER THREE

EXCELLENCE: DANIEL 2

While the first tale (Dan 1) served to introduce and provide cohesion for the compilation of Daniel 1–6, the second tale (Dan 2) occupies its own significant position within the compilation. The opening verses of the chapter make the transition from Hebrew into Aramaic, which is the language of the remainder of the tales. The use of Aramaic extends beyond the compilation of Daniel 1–6 and into Daniel 7, a chapter that is parallel to Daniel 2 (see Albertz 1994:585). Both chapters feature a vision of a succession of kingdoms and look forward to the visions of the apocalyptic latter portion of Daniel (cf. Collins 1993:152). As a tale of court contest, Daniel 2 serves as the parade example of the comparison between Daniel and the Babylonian specialists. A test of Daniel and his God provides an exemplary opportunity to demonstrate the excellence of the Judean God as a patron and Daniel as his client. The two main components of Daniel 2 are the story of the crisis of the dream and the dream's contents and interpretation. Goldingay notes that "interpreters disagree over whether at heart Dan 2 is a court-tale (which happens to contain a dream report) or a dream report (the court-tale being mere framework)" (1989:41). After a brief review of these two facets of Daniel 2, the chapter will be read—with attention primarily to the court-tale—through the lens of the model of honor outlined above in Chapter One (3.1).

1 *The Text*

1.1 *Daniel 2:1–30, 46–49*

Apart from a brief chronological notation (again, notoriously difficult to corroborate either historically or in relation to the notation given in Dan 1:1; see Montgomery 1927:140–41; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:137–38; Collins 1993:154–55), Daniel 2:1 moves immediately to a report of Nebuchadnezzar's troubling dreams. In order to learn the significance of his dreams, the king calls the "dream interpreters,

exorcists, sorcerers, and Chaldeans" (2:2) to clarify (נגד) them for him. Contrary to standard practice, however, Nebuchadnezzar does not relate the content of his dream (Collins 1993:156–57; Oppenheim 1956:219); rather, he demands that the Babylonian diviners make known to him the dream itself in addition to its interpretation (פשר). Though the diviners protest this impossible task, the king promises reward for its successful completion and threatens death for its failure. When the Babylonian specialists remain impotent, Nebuchadnezzar indeed orders the destruction of "all the sages of Babylon" (2:12).

At this point Daniel and his companions appear. Although the Judeans were not present at the king's initial consultation, the Babylonians consider them to be among "the sages," and they are therefore sought for death (קטל) (2:13). Daniel seeks information about the decree of death and, after he is informed by the king's official who is to carry out the order, he recruits his companions to petition God concerning the crisis. God reveals the "mystery" (רז) to Daniel (2:19), who is able to halt the execution of the king's order by offering to meet the king's demands. Daniel is clear in his insistence that his knowledge is distinct from that of the Babylonian specialists. While they failed to perform this impossible task, Daniel succeeds—not by means of his own wisdom and abilities but through his relationship with God (2:27–30). After Daniel makes known the dream and its interpretation, the king indeed rewards him and recognizes the power of his God (2:46–49).

1.2 *Daniel 2:31–45*

In Daniel 2:31–45, Daniel relates first the king's dream (2:31–36) and then its interpretation (2:36–45) to the king. The dream contained a vision of a statue, large and resplendent, with head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay. A stone struck the statue and shattered the feet of iron and clay, and then all the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were shattered and scattered with no trace (or "no place could be found for them," according to Goldingay [1989:31–32, 35]). The stone that shattered the statue became a large mountain and filled the earth (leaving no room for the shattered material [Goldingay 1989:35]). The interpretation identifies King Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold, while the descending body parts represent kingdoms or reigns that will follow his. The

stone represents the kingdom that God will establish, one that will shatter the other kingdoms and last forever.

The dream and its interpretation play an important role in the book of Daniel as a whole, especially as it relates to Daniel 7 and the apocalyptic chapters that follow. In the narrower context of the compilation of Daniel 1–6, however, we will attend to it with reference to its use of honor language and imagery. Though most interpreters move quickly to a reading of this dream in concert with the similar material later in Daniel, sense can be made of its imagery with only the context provided by these opening chapters of the compilation. What rises to the surface in that more limited context is a sense that the dream corroborates the dynamics of the comparison, namely, that the Judean God is superior and that Daniel is right to ally himself with this Patron-God (see below, 3.2.3). When the dream is not predetermined to be the most significant element in the chapter, the surrounding tale of the dream's crisis and solution dominates, as it does in my reading here. In other words, I read Daniel 2 as "a court-tale (which happens to contain a dream report)" (Goldingay 1989:41). Daniel's success in contrast with the Babylonian specialists' failure carries the greatest impact in this tale as well as in the compilation.

Attending to the story of the dream crisis itself, commentators have noted the significant change of status marked by this tale's depiction of one of the "sons of the exile" (2:25) rising to the position of administration in the court (2:49). This motif is recognized more clearly through comparison of this tale to the similar tale of Joseph in Genesis 41 (Collins 1993:173; Towner 1984:29–31). Folklorists and others interested in genre designations (esp. Humphreys 1973; Niditch and Doran 1977) have distinguished two subcategories of the genre "court legend" (Collins 1984:106–07; Wills 1990:12–14). Of the two—"court contest" and "court conflict"—Daniel 2 is an example of "court contest" (Collins 1984:49–50; Wills 1990:2–3), wherein (1) a person of lower status is called before a person of higher status to answer difficult questions or solve a problem requiring insight, (2) the person of higher status poses a problem which no one seems capable of solving, (3) the person of lower status solves the problem, and (4) thus is rewarded for answering (Niditch and Doran 1977:180). Genesis 41 is likewise said to belong to this subcategory of "court contest," though sometimes the entire cycle of Genesis 37–41 is said

to be an example of "court conflict," wherein the hero starts in a state of prosperity, which is then lost, usually through the conspiracy of enemies, before the hero is eventually vindicated and again exalted (Collins 1984:119; Wills 1990:3). Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 belong to this latter genre, "court conflict" (see Chapter Four).

When considered in its place within the compilation (Dan 1–6), Daniel 2 presents an interesting variation on the standard form of "court contest," however, especially when compared with Joseph's story in Genesis 41. For example, Joseph finds himself in prison when the crisis arises in the court (Gen 41:9–13). Thus we find a highly accentuated contrast in status between Joseph, who is dragged up out of the dungeon requiring a shave and change of clothes in order to be presentable (Gen 41:14), and the Pharaoh, who sits as the supreme ruler of all Egypt. Having performed the required feat, Joseph is then elevated to a position of high status that again contrasts sharply with his previous position in jail (Gen 41:40–44) (though Joseph had fallen to his position in jail from a previous lofty position, described in Gen 39:1–6). In the case of Daniel, the narrative of chapter 2 contains discordant elements that point in two different directions. Many commentators notice only the indicators of Daniel's lowly status, such as his absence from the king's initial consultation (2:2–12) and Arioch's introduction of Daniel to the king as one "from the sons of the exile" (2:25), and conclude that Daniel 2 is a typical tale of court contest (Collins 1993:173).

However, other elements in the narrative suggest that Daniel's initial status was not as lowly as Joseph's or as many readers assume. For example, we have noted that, *by the Babylonians*, Daniel and his companions were considered as ones who had completed a three-year process of education and resocialization and joined the king's court and been established in his personal service (Dan 1). Read with this in mind, the narrative of Daniel 2 needs to answer why Daniel was not present at the king's initial meeting with the diviners (2:2–11), and why Arioch introduced Daniel to the king as an "exile" (2:25; the similar occurrence in 6:14 [6:13 Eng.] can be understood as an intentional attempt to "label" Daniel—see below, Chapter Four, 2.2), but the tale otherwise presents Daniel as holding a position of relatively high status. These discordant elements are probably to be explained by the redactional history of the book (see Hartman and Di Lella 1978:139). As Collins explains, "It is very likely that in the original tale Daniel did not belong to 'the sages of Babylon'

but was simply a youth who came forward." This accounts for "the fact that he appears to be unknown in vv 24–25," and thus "his absence from the dialogue of vv 2–12 becomes problematic only because of the redactor's or collector's imposition of the new context of chap. 1" (1993:158). An earlier version, then, in which Daniel is known only as an exile and not a powerful member of the court, is more typical of a court contest and would benefit from closer analysis of the change in status. With the addition of Daniel 1 and the integration of Daniel 2 into the compilation of Daniel 1–6, however, Daniel becomes not an unknown outsider, a lower-status person similar to Joseph in Genesis 41, but a member of the king's own court. That alone does not disqualify Daniel 2 from consideration as a court contest, however, for the person of lower status in the contest may nevertheless be a member of the court (Wills 1990:3). The relatively smaller difference in status, however, noted in Daniel 2 compared to that noted in Genesis 41 does suggest that the theme of status reversal is significant but not of central importance in Daniel 2. The focus of the tale is clearly not on the status change alone but rather on the comparison of Daniel with the Babylonian diviners and the source of Daniel's superiority over them.

2 *The Model*

2.1 *Challenge and Riposte*

For our reading of the narrative of the dream crisis, it is necessary to consider in more detail the dynamics of challenge and riposte, especially as a means of achieving honor. We have said that the principal means by which honor is achieved is the social struggle known as challenge and riposte, which depends upon a perception of limited good and results in an agonistic undercurrent in social interactions (see Chapter One, 3.1.3). Very broadly, the basic structure of challenge and riposte involves action (a challenge) and reaction (a response). Challenges take a variety of forms, and they are met with a number of possible responses. A *challenge* can take the form of words or deeds and can be either positive (e.g., a gift; see Matthews 1999) or negative (see Figure 4, adapted from Malina 2001a:34). The riposte, or response, likewise takes many different forms (Malina and Neyrey 1991b:29–32). The response is determined partly by the perception of the challenge and is limited by the fact

that only those who are social equals may engage in challenge and riposte (Malina 2001a:35). *Positive rejection*, that is, scorning the challenge, is the proper response from one who is challenged by another of lower status. However, for contestants who are social equals, a response of disdain requires the challenger to follow through with the attempt to wrest honor from the other. For example, if the initial challenge had been a threat, the challenger must carry out the threat. Alternatively, *negative refusal*, on the other end of the range, also consists in not responding. In this case, however, the failure to respond to the challenge results in dishonor for the one who, by not responding, demonstrates inability to counter-challenge the challenger. Finally, *acceptance* and the issue of a counter-challenge is another possible, and frequent, response. In this case, the one who was challenged accepts the challenge and responds in kind, thus perpetuating the contest. These responses can be charted as below (see Figure 5), following Bourdieu (1966:215) and Malina (2001a:34).

	Positive challenge	Negative challenge
Deed	gift	physical affront
Word	praise request for help	insult threat
Word and Deed	promise of help and help	threat and attempt to fulfill it

Figure 4. Forms of an honor challenge (Malina 2001a)

Positive rejection	Acceptance	Negative refusal
scorn, disdain, contempt ↓ ↓	response that entails a counter-challenge ↓	no response ↓ ↓
if the parties are equals, vengeance is required from the challenger; if the challenger is inferior, nothing is required	exchange (contest, game) continues	dishonor for the one who was challenged

Figure 5. Forms of response to a challenge
(Bourdieu 1966; Malina 2001a)

An especially clear example of the dynamics of challenge and riposte at work in a Hebrew Bible narrative is found in an episode of the story of Gideon in Judges 8:4–17 (cf. Pedersen 1991:219). While pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian, Gideon approaches the men of Succoth (8:5) and Penuel (8:8) and makes a *claim* to honor by a positive word—a request for help. The men of Succoth and Penuel take this claim as a *challenge*, and they respond with *acceptance* and a *counter-challenge* by a negative word—an insult couched in the form of a question, "Do you now have Zebah and Zalmunna in custody, that we should give your army food?" (8:6); "and the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered him" (8:8). Continuing the exchange, Gideon also *counter-challenges*, now with negative words—threats (8:7, 9). After capturing Zebah and Zalmunna, he indeed returns and adds deeds to his words by carrying out his threats against both Succoth (8:14–16) and Penuel (8:17). The public verdict, while not explicit in the text, clearly favors Gideon with a grant of honor both for his ability to capture Zebah and Zalmunna and for his ability to meet the challenge of Succoth and Penuel and carry out the deeds he threatened against them, deeds which leave them quite dishonored and which vindicate Gideon's initial claim to honor. Note, too, the integral role played in the contest by aggressive questions (for the book of Judges in particular, see Kirkpatrick 1998:32–35; for the role questions play in honor challenges more generally, see Neyrey 1998d). The counter-challenged insult was a question (8:6), and Gideon recalls the question as he demonstrates his prowess in fulfilling both the conditions of the question (i.e., the challenge) and his own threats: "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me, saying, 'Do you now have Zebah and Zalmunna . . .?' " (8:14–16). Aggressive questions are at work in the honor challenges in Daniel 2 as well.

2.2 *The Honor of Virtuous Deeds*

In order to appreciate fully Daniel's success at achieving honor in the challenging crisis of the dream, we also need to revisit the criteria for honor provided by ancient sources. The *encomium* has already provided helpful categories for establishing that which is honorable, and thus praiseworthy, in one's life and circumstances (see Chapter One, 3.1.8). Under the category of accomplishments are various

deeds and exercises of virtue. Several writers further specify the characteristics of praiseworthy deeds. For example, from the second century CE comes the rhetorical handbook (*progymnasmata*) of Aelius Theon, which specifies that "praiseworthy actions are also those occurring in a timely manner, and if one acted alone, or first, or when no one acted, or more than others, or with a few, or beyond one's age, or exceeding expectation" (from Butts 1987:470–71; see also G. Kennedy 2003:51). This listing of criteria is not unique to Theon but finds expression in the works of several others (see the parallels cited by Butts 1987:488) and is already formulaic in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Aristotle reminds his students that what is excellent—that is, superior, surpassing—is praiseworthy and honorable (1.9.39). Praise is due, therefore, to the one who is "the only one or the first or one of a few or the one who most has done something; for all these things are honorable" (1.9.38, from G. Kennedy 1991:85–86). The extraordinary circumstances under which Daniel succeeds in the crisis of the dream increase his reputation, praiseworthiness, and grant of honor.

This tale in Daniel 2 also further develops the significance of Daniel's relationship of patronage with God. The text makes clear to the readers—as Daniel makes clear to his interlocutors—that Daniel himself is not the extraordinary factor at work in these circumstances. Rather, Daniel's relationship with God affords Daniel certain favors—grants of "wisdom and power" (2:20)—from God. God's contribution proves to be the predominant force as the events unfold; hence, Daniel avers that "it is not because of any wisdom that I have beyond any other living being that this mystery has been revealed to me" (2:30) but instead "there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries and who has made known . . . your dream" (2:28). This relationship of divine favor that Daniel enjoys is best understood on the analogy of a patron-client relationship.

In addition to the general introduction to patronage provided above (see Chapter One, 3.1.8), we can also inquire into the vocabulary that reveals the presence of patron-client relationships. For one, discourse that involves the exchange of goods and services between two parties "unequal in status, wealth, and influence" (Malina 2001b:31) alerts us to the operation of patronage. Patrons have a high-status position from which to provide what clients need: "a diversity of 'goods' including food, financial aid, physical protection, career advancement," etc. (Elliott 1996:149). Clients respond not in kind but with commitment, that is, with expressions of gratitude and loy-

alty, public declamation of praise. The language of "grace" and "favor" often accompanies the description of a patron's benefactions (Malina 1998d), and terminology of kinship is appropriate to express the client's commitment (e.g., God as "Father"; see Malina 1998d and 1988b). Already in the first tale, readers—along with the Babylonian chief officer—have witnessed a grant of favor (חסד ורחמים) that Daniel receives from God (1:9). Daniel and his companions request this same show of favor (רחמין) from God in the second tale (2:18), and they reciprocate for its bestowal (2:19) with a hymn of thanks and praise (2:20–23) and public recognition (2:27–30). These dynamics of patronage not only help us make sense of the players and their actions in this tale, but they also alert us to another virtuous deed on Daniel's part—righteousness (or justice), which entails precisely this maintenance of patronage by fulfillment of its expected duties (see further below, 3.2.3).

3 *The Reading*

3.1 *Daniel 2:1–13*

Daniel 2 opens with the description of a distressing situation, but one that the ancient world had devised ways of addressing. The king is troubled by his dreams, but remedy is available in the form of treatment by the appropriate specialists (Collins lists parallel scenes described by Herodotus and Cicero [1993:155]). Nebuchadnezzar calls before him the regular retinue of diviners: "dream interpreters, exorcists, sorcerers, and Chaldeans" (2:2; for more on these terms, see above, Chapter Two, 3.2.1), and the clearing up of these troubling dreams begins as usual (see Oppenheim 1956:217–25). There are particular expectations which accompany certain roles, and here we observe them in practice. The king is the recipient of some communication of divine origin (see Oppenheim 1956:219), and it is his duty (and desire!) to understand the message and meaning. To do so, he summons those charged with this task—his specially-trained diviners (2:2). He declares to them his wish to understand his dream (2:3), and they confidently respond with their intention to fulfill their duty and interpret it (2:4).

The king, however, raises the stakes. Rather than relate the dream to his specialists for their interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar commands them not only to interpret the dream but to tell him its contents as

well (2:5). Commentators have suggested various reasons to account for this divergence from the standard procedure (Collins 1993:156). Josephus (*Ant.* 10.195, 198) describes the king as having forgotten the dream, and John Calvin (1993:49, 51) makes the same claim. Baldwin (1978:87–88) is a contemporary example of the same line of thought. Others specify that Nebuchadnezzar had not forgotten the dream but was merely concerned to avoid deceit and elicit a genuine divination, as Daniel 2:9 indicates.

The text seems less interested in providing a reason for this unusual request than in presenting the dynamics of the exchange between the king and his diviners in the form of an honor challenge. When analyzed according to the structure of challenge and riposte, the king's charge to his diviners—a request for help—is also the occasion for a threat: "if you do not . . ., you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be reduced to rubbish" (2:5). The diviners are being asked not simply to practice their arts but to prove them, to perform an extraordinary deed that validates their role and defends their right to status in the king's court. To the extent that they help the king, they make claims upon him to honor them for their training and accomplishments. But the king now puts them to the test, requiring that they defend their honor. "Perform this deed," he says, "or else. . . ." Not only does he offer a threat by way of challenge, but there is a corresponding reward for the one who proves his excellence by performing this task: "if you do . . ., you will receive gifts and rewards and great honor [יקר שניא] from me" (2:6). The NRSV translation and the interpretation of Louis Hartman and Alexander Di Lella (1978:138) understand the difficult word, אזדא, to indicate the public nature of this challenge: "this is a public decree" (2:5 NRSV; cf. the same phrase translated differently, "I have firmly decreed," in 2:8 NRSV; the nature of the translational difficulty and the variety of proposed solutions is surveyed by Montgomery [1927:145–48]). The situation is clear: before a public audience, the king has challenged the worth of his diviners. If they are able to defend their honor and fulfill their role, they will retain honor and win reward besides. If not, they will be dishonored as those who are unable to respond to a challenge.

When the diviners reply to the king, they use the same language they employed initially, but now it carries a different significance. The first time (2:4), they were playing their part in the standard ritual of dream interpretation: "Tell us the dream and we will explain

the interpretation." The second time (2:7), however, they are counter-challenging the king by requesting help. He has demanded that they reveal the dream in addition to its interpretation; they respond with their same words, "Tell us the dream and we will explain the interpretation," but surely the emphasis falls now on the demand that the king relent in his challenge and provide the contents of the dream himself. The king continues the contest by not only repeating his original request but adding a further insult to this counter-challenge. He accuses them of plotting deception (2:9). The ancient world recognized deception as a legitimate "strategy for establishing and protecting honor" (Neyrey 1998b:43; Pilch 1999:46–51). The king will allow no trickery in this contest; the Babylonian specialists must truly perform an exceptional feat to protect their honor and win the king's promised rewards.

The diviners' reply at this point falls into three parts and, as a whole, performs three functions. The three parts of the reply include: (1) the assertion that "no one on earth" could perform such a task (2:10a), (2) the reminder that no king has ever asked such a thing (2:10b), and (3) the affirmation that only the gods could do such a thing (2:11) (cf. Collins 1984:46). Two of the functions of this reply are for the reader of the tale and have been noted by other commentators. First, the admission that only the gods are able to perform this task foreshadows Daniel's performance of it with the help of his God (2:19, 23, 28) (Towner 1984:32; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:144).

Second, the claim that no human could do such a thing is "hyperbolic" (Collins 1993:157) and serves to prepare the reader for the truly extraordinary victory of Daniel. Note that the adjective used in 2:11 to describe the request as "difficult" (יקיר) is from the same root as the noun "honor" (יקר) and as an adjective can also mean "honorable" (Ezra 4:10). There is a clear link between what is difficult and what is honorable and praiseworthy (cf. Montgomery 1927:153). Our social-science model helps us appreciate that great honor is accorded those who can perform a difficult deed that no one else can or has ever done. Such deeds are precisely what the ancient rhetoricians instructed their students to parade before the public in an *encomium* or comparison. Recall the words of Theon: "Praiseworthy actions are also those occurring in a timely manner, and if one acted alone, or first, or when no one acted, or more than others, or with a few, or beyond one's age, or exceeding expectation" (from Butts

1987:470–71; see also G. Kennedy 2003:51). According to the admission of the Babylonian diviners themselves, Daniel would be the first and the only one to perform this great deed, and we will see below (3.2.4) that virtually all of Theon's criteria are met by Daniel's performance.

Third, there is a clear rejoinder to the king (a common form employed in honor challenges [see Neyrey 1998d] but unnoticed by commentators here) that is devised to alter the calculus of the challenge for the benefit of the diviners' honor. As noted above (2.1), there are certain circumstances under which the ones who have been challenged may refuse to respond and yet retain their honor while the challenger ends up being dishonored. In this case, the diviners attempt to suggest that the king is acting shamefully by making a foolish request—"what you ask is impossible for a person to do" (2:10a)—and they appeal to the precedent of wise rulers of the past, who were never so foolish—"no king has ever asked such a thing" (2:10b)—to remind the king that he is sparring not with his social equals but with the divine ones—"only the gods could respond to this demand of yours" (2:11). They attempt to rebuff his challenge by diverting its aim away from themselves. Their ploy is not successful, however, for the king grows angry at their failure to perform and begins to carry out his threats. He gives orders "to destroy [אבד] all the sages of Babylon [כל חכימי בבל]" (2:12). Daniel and his companions, considered by the Babylonians to be among "the sages," are sought for death (2:13).

3.2 *Daniel 2:14–30*

The stage is thus set for Daniel to be compared with the Babylonian specialists in this situation of challenge and crisis. Daniel's performance is narrated with attention to his honorable behavior and excellent accomplishments, in sharp contrast with the failure of the Babylonians. For example, the Babylonian diviners attempted to parry the thrust of the king by insinuating that his challenge was inappropriate (and should thus be retracted) (2:10–11). This aggressive tactic proved to be ineffective, however, as the king refused to relent and began to fulfill his threats. In contrast, Daniel is described as acting with "discretion and discernment" (עמא וטעם; 2:14 NASB; translated "good counsel and prudence" by Collins 1993:149; taken as hendiadys, "Daniel prudently took counsel," by Hartman and Di

Lella 1978:139; cf. "shrewd judgment," Goldingay 1989:30, 33). While it is difficult to establish one-to-one correspondence on the basis of individual words alone, an investigation of semantic fields and social use suggests a similarity between the "good counsel and prudence" described here and the "prudence" or "wisdom" (φρόνησις) and the "temperance" or "self-control" (σωφροσύνη) described by the Greeks. Recall that the *encomium* rehearses the praiseworthy subject's deeds of the soul, which consist of examples of the exercise of virtue, especially—but not limited to—the four cardinal virtues of prudence (φρόνησις), justice or righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία), and self-control (σωφροσύνη) (Neyrey 1998c:106–23). Daniel behaves here with the restraint of self-control in contrast with the aggressive tactics of the Babylonian diviners and the hot-headed rashness of the king (2:12). Daniel acts with prudence and measured care in contrast with the desperate maneuvers of the Babylonians. Further, Daniel demonstrates justice or righteousness in his relationship to the God by whose help Daniel averts this crisis. Let us take each virtue in turn.

3.2.1 *Daniel's Temperance*

The works of Aristotle and Menander Rhetor help us appreciate the ancient understanding of these cardinal virtues. By the ancients' descriptions, we recognize them at work in Daniel's actions. Self-control, or temperance, is characterized in general by "the mind's control over passions" (Neyrey 1998c:120; see Aristotle, *Virt. vit.* 2.5, 5.1). To help him mark the territory of temperance, Aristotle contrasts it with its opposite, describing those behaviors that do not belong to the virtues. For example, while "gentleness is goodness of the passionate part [of the human spirit] that makes people difficult to move to anger" (*Virt. vit.* 2.2), "ill-temper is badness of the passionate part that makes [people] easy to provoke to anger" (*Virt. vit.* 3.2). When Daniel learns that he has been slated for death by the king's enraged decree, Daniel does not respond with anger of his own but rather with "discretion and discernment" (2:14 NASB). "To gentleness belongs ability to bear reproaches with moderation, and not to embark on revenge quickly, and not to be easily provoked to anger, but free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquility and stability in the spirit" (*Virt. vit.* 4.3). Aristotle's words match Daniel's actions and thus contrast precisely and starkly with the king's.

3.2.2 *Daniel's Prudence*

Aristotle's delineation of prudence, or wisdom, follows, with key phrases for reading Daniel emphasized by italics.

> It belongs to wisdom [φρόνησις] *to take counsel* [βουλεύω], *to judge the* goods and *evils* and all the things in life *that are* desirable and *to be avoided, to use all the available goods finely*, to behave rightly in society, to observe due occasions, *to employ both speech and action with sagacity*, to have expert knowledge of all things that are useful. Memory and experience and acuteness are each of them either a consequence or a concomitant of wisdom; or some of them are as it were subsidiary causes of wisdom, as for instance experience and memory, others as it were parts of it, for example *good counsel* [εὐβουλία] and acuteness. (*Virt. vit.* 4.1–2)

Menander Rhetor provides us with a similar depiction. Indeed, Menander links prudence with temperance by declaring that the former enables the latter to come to successful fruition (2.376.15–20, see Russell and Wilson 1981:90–91). A rhetor's description of a "prudent" subject should then add:

> that he is "quick to see, clever in understanding, better than a prophet at foreseeing the future, the best judge [γνώμων] of the good counsel [εὐβουλία] of others, and well able to tell [γνῶναι] the difficult from the easy." (Menander Rhetor 2.376.20–23, from Russell and Wilson 1981:90–93)

Elsewhere, Menander describes prudence as "capacity for clear decisions [lit., "to be able to make decisions (βουλεύω) clearly"] about present needs" (2.415.28–29, from Russell and Wilson 1981:166–67). The description of Daniel's actions portrays these virtues so clearly that the Greek translators of Daniel 2:14 (both OG and Th) render the Aramaic phrase, עטא וטעם, with βουλὴν καὶ γνώμην, "counsel and judgment," resonating precisely with the descriptions and terminology preserved by the Greek rhetoricians.

3.2.3 *Daniel's Righteousness*

When Daniel has discerned the cause of the crisis, he demonstrates another of the cardinal virtues, justice or righteousness (δικαιοσύνη). In the third century CE, we have from Menander Rhetor (though derived ultimately from Plato or Aristotle [see Russell and Wilson 1981:263–64]) a description of justice:

> The parts of justice are piety, fair dealing and reverence: piety toward the gods, fair dealing towards men, reverence towards the departed.

> Piety to the gods consists of two elements: being god-loved and god-loving. The former means being loved by the gods and receiving many blessings from them, the latter consists of loving the gods and having a relationship of friendship with them. (1.361.17–25, from Russell and Wilson 1981:62–63)

In a context of exile, diaspora, or foreign subjugation, loyalty to one's native God is a particularly conspicuous way to exercise the virtue of justice or righteousness. Daniel exhibits righteousness when he enlists the help of his companions and they make supplication to God, asking that God be compassionate, that is, lend help in their situation of crisis (2:18). The Old Greek translation specifies their acts of piety as fasting and petitionary prayer (νηστείαν καὶ δέησιν; 2:18); further, it reports that they sought "vindication" (τιμωρίαν; 2:18; Collins [1993:149] suggests that the OG reflects a different Aramaic reading: Th οἰκτιρμοὺς from MT רחמין; OG τιμςρίαν from a form of נחם), which is the kind of language we would expect in a context of challenge. A loyal client may appropriately expect vindication from his patron. Specifically in this crisis, Daniel needs *to know* something, for he is faced with a "mystery" (רז; 2:18). To the loyal client Daniel, God provides the help needed—in this case knowledge, information: "the mystery was revealed to Daniel" (2:19). In the vocabulary of Menander Rhetor, Daniel receives a blessing based on having a relationship of friendship (i.e., patronage; see Neyrey 1998c:109) with God. He is thus both god-loved and god-loving.

Furthermore, Daniel appropriately responds to God's gracious gift of favor with praise and honor in the doxology and thanksgiving voiced in Daniel 2:20–23. Daniel emphasizes specific characteristics of God that are demonstrated in the present crisis. "Wisdom and power" (חכמתא ונבורתא) are said to belong to God (2:20). Specifically, God has the power to "change the times and the eras" (מהשנא עדניא וזמניא; 2:21), "depose kings and establish kings" (מהעדה מלכין ומהקים מלכין; 2:21), "know what is in darkness" (ידע מה בחשוכא; 2:22), and "reveal deep and hidden things" (גלא עמיקתא ומסתרתא; 2:22). Further, God "gives wisdom . . . and knowledge" (יהב חכמתא . . . ומנדעא; 2:21). Daniel offers "thanks and praise" (מהודא ומשבח) to God for giving him "wisdom and power" (חכמתא ונבורתא) by "making known" (הודע; 2:23) the king's dream and its interpretation, which have to do with the changes of times and kings (see 2:31–45). Daniel thus demonstrates righteousness by showing piety towards God and properly exercising his relationship of friendship with God.

Patronage is the social institution that is implicitly assumed by this discussion of "righteousness" as a "relationship of friendship." God as patron provides Daniel with the wisdom and power to solve the mystery of the dream, and Daniel reciprocates with commitment, praising God and affirming the ties of kinship that bind them ("To you, God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise"; 2:23). Both sides of this exchange are made explicit in the text. In Daniel 2:18, Daniel and his companions request what most English translations designate as "compassion" or "mercy" from God. The Aramaic term is רחמין, and its Hebrew cognate appears in Daniel 1:9 along with a common companion, "lovingkindness": חסד ורחמים (the pair appears in Jer 16:5; Hos 2:21 [2:19 Eng.]; Zech 7:9; Pss 40:12 [40:11 Eng.], 103:4, 77:9). With this language, the text indicates God's role as patron and Daniel's as a client in need who receives a benefaction, a grant of favor. The tales of Daniel 1 and 2 describe the client as being in very real and very serious need. In both cases, as in later tales, God's provision saves Daniel's life. The king has the power to "kill whomever he wishes" (Dan 5:19), and the threat of death plays a distinctive role in these tales (see 1:10, 2:13). The patron's help is met with the client's expression of gratitude; God's grant of favor (רחמין)—salvation from death—is met with thanks and praise in the hymn of 2:20–23.

Attention to these dynamics of patron-client exchange brings another issue into clearer focus. Collins appeals to Daniel 1:9 as support for the idea that "the sympathy of the chief eunuch is in accordance with the generally favorable attitude of the gentile rulers toward the Jews throughout chaps. 1–6" (1993:143). Daniel 1:9 does not, however, indicate sympathy on the part of the chief eunuch; *God* is the one who is responsible for this favor that Daniel receives (see Seow 2003a:27). The syntax in the verse is difficult, but it is clear that God is the subject: "God made Daniel to be favored before the chief eunuch." Any "sympathy" that the Babylonian official has for Daniel was not manufactured by the Babylonian himself but was orchestrated as a gift from God for Daniel's benefit. With Smith-Christopher (1996; 2001), I reject the notion that the book of Daniel portrays a "generally favorable attitude of the gentile rulers," and Daniel 1:9 certainly does not support such a notion. Indeed, if it were not for God's benefaction in this situation, Daniel would apparently have no other recourse. Daniel 1:10 employs language that indicates a serious threat of death—for the Babylonian official himself, let alone

for the captive exile, Daniel—which cannot be reconciled with a "favorable attitude" of the king (Montgomery takes the phrase in Dan 1:10 as an idiom, which softens its deadly implications [1927:131, 133–34]).

Interestingly, commentators rarely address the question of how Daniel 1:9 functions in the tale. Does it point forward to the time when Daniel convinces a Babylonian guard to withhold the king's food and wine (1:14)? Unfortunately for this proposal, a *different* Babylonian official is involved in that decision (Montgomery 1927:131; Collins 1993:144). Does it perhaps point further ahead to the results of the youths' presentation before the king (1:19)? This again involves different personnel. Does it, then, point backward to the time when Daniel is chosen from among the exiles in the first place (1:3, 6)? Daniel 1:9 seems to be too specific to allow an attempt to make it apply generally to the episode as a whole. No matter what particular advantage God's favor wins for Daniel, the text makes clear that Daniel's success is dependent upon God's provision—not the "sympathy" of Daniel's captors, unless God provides it (1:9); not the learned arts of divination, but the "wisdom and power" (2:23; cf. 1:17) that God provides. Collins does recognize that the use of רחמים in the Hebrew Bible's prophetic texts "implies a fuller sense of communal relationship than the passing sympathy indicated here" (1993:143). Indeed, the term implies at least the fictive kinship of a patron-client relationship (Simkins 1999:128; Malina 1998d) if not the intimacy of biological kinship (etymologically, the term encompasses those who shared the same "womb," רחם). The term is thus a significant analogy by which to portray the relationship of the Judeans to their God. It does not indicate "passing sympathy," and it does not emanate from the Babylonian official—it is a grant of favor from God as patron to a faithful client in need.

3.2.4 *Honor through Comparison*

Daniel's honor is portrayed in the tale of Daniel 2 not only in his performance of virtuous deeds, but also in the stark contrast drawn through comparison with the Babylonian characters in the tale. The Babylonian diviners have no such relationship of friendship with their king nor, apparently, with their gods (Goldingay 1989:54), as Daniel reminds the king when he appears before him to face the king's challenge. The Babylonian specialists themselves first noted that what the king asks can be done only by "the gods" (אלהין; 2:11). Yet they

are apparently unable to procure help from any gods—they certainly call upon none in the text—and so they are unable to do what the king asks. They similarly fail in their appeal for help to the king himself, who does not relent in his challenging demands. In the terms of the four cardinal virtues, their wisdom has failed, and instead of exercising prudence, self-control, and righteousness, they make a failed bid at counter-challenging their king by suggesting that he is acting foolishly. The comparison with Daniel could not be more stark. Daniel acts with prudence and self-control (2:14; which contrasts also with the "rashness" exhibited by the king; see 2:12, 15), demonstrates righteousness (2:18–23), and is given the wisdom (2:23) to meet the king's challenge and perform this impossible task. Honor is achieved by the exercise of virtue as well as by the accomplishment of the difficult task. The comparison with the Babylonian characters further amplifies Daniel's honor.

Adding to the honor achieved by accomplishment of the task are the difficult circumstances under which Daniel succeeds, excelling where others fail or dare not try. The ancient rhetoricians cataloged the criteria for praiseworthy action, and Daniel meets virtually all of them. According to Theon, "Praiseworthy actions are also those occurring in a timely manner, and if one acted alone, or first, or when no one acted, or more than others, or with a few, or beyond one's age, or exceeding expectation" (from Butts 1987:470–71; see also G. Kennedy 2003:51). Daniel certainly acted in a *timely manner*, as the narrator's skill emphasizes with attention to the pressing urgency of the king's demands. Arioch acts "hastily" (Dan 2:25) to bring Daniel before the king to meet the king's challenge. Further, Daniel acted *alone*, in contrast to the gathered mass of Babylonian diviners, who nevertheless prove impotent. Or, if Daniel's companions are to be included, as they are in 2:17–18, we may say that Daniel acted *with a few*, again in contrast to the extensive list of Babylonian specialists. Daniel is clearly the *first* to act, for the Babylonians themselves declare that such a thing as the king requests has never been demanded before, let alone performed by a human (2:10–11). Likewise, it is superfluous to say that Daniel's success *exceeded expectation*, for the Babylonians had placed the deed outside the capabilities of humanity (2:11). We may even say that Daniel acted *when no one acted*, for the Babylonian specialists abdicated their roles when they refused to perform their divinations and instead challenged the king by insulting the wisdom of his request.

Finally, in addition to the criteria specified above, Theon also lists actions done "for the sake of others" (from Butts 1987:468–69; see also G. Kennedy 2003:51; so also Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9.19). Aristotle declares that one's "kindliness" (χάρις) is to be praised as "great if [the recipient] is either greatly in need or in need of what is great and difficult [to get] or in times of crisis of this sort or if [the giver] is the only one or the first or the one who most confers it" (*Rhet.* 2.7.2, from G. Kennedy 1991:150). Daniel fulfills even this condition, as he goes to Arioch, who was to serve as "the Lord High Executioner" (Hartman and Di Lella 1978:144; cf. Collins 1993:158), and stays his hand. Daniel saves not only himself, nor only his companions with him, but he delivers the Babylonian diviners as well (see Collins 1993:159) with his order to Arioch: "Do not destroy [אבד] the sages of Babylon" (2:24). Daniel's gracious benevolence saves even his foreign captors in this great and difficult crisis. These are the actions of a truly honorable one, and the public audience, both in the tale (2:46–49; see below, 3.4) and of the tale (the readers), is sure to grant honor to Daniel while correspondingly lowering its estimation of the Babylonian specialists.

3.2.5 *Honor through Excellence*

Daniel wins honor not only in the comparison of him with the Babylonian diviners but also in meeting the challenge of the king. The exchange of the king's demands and the diviners' replies took the form of challenge and riposte. The Babylonian diviners failed not only in their ability to grant the king's request but also in their bid to counter-challenge his threat. Now Daniel has interrupted the king's execution order; that is, he has contravened the king's attempt to carry out his threat against the sages of Babylon (2:24). Thus when Daniel is brought into the presence of the king (2:25), the dynamics are again those of challenge and riposte. Just as Gideon and his challengers disputed by means of aggressive questions (Judg 8:4–17; see above, 2.1), so King Nebuchadnezzar questions Daniel: "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I saw and its interpretation?" (2:26). The challenge that had been put to the Babylonian specialists is now directed toward Daniel. The Judean, in contrast to his foreign counterparts, proves able to meet the challenge and provide the help that the king requests.

Daniel continues to display his righteousness, moreover, by carefully distinguishing his source of success from that appealed to by

the Babylonian specialists (see Figure 6). As we have seen, Daniel's power and knowledge is not from the same source as that of the Babylonians (see also Seow 2003b:358–59). Daniel does not succeed where they fail merely because he is better at what they do than they are; he does not do a better job of performing the same task. Rather, Daniel is the "friend" of one with greater power and access to resources than either the Babylonian diviners or even their king enjoys. As a part of that "relationship of friendship," Daniel does not take honor for himself away from his Patron. Aristotle describes as honorable those "successes gained for others" (*Rhet.* 1.9.19), and Daniel's success not only saved the lives of the sages but also resulted in success for his companions, as Daniel requests that they be promoted along with him (2:49). Each aspect of Daniel's behavior serves as grounds for honor: his exercise of virtue in contrast to the Babylonians, the excellence of his ability to meet the king's challenge and interpret the dream, and his deference to the source of his ability who truly deserves the praise and honor. In the concluding section of the tale (2:46–49), God indeed receives the deserved praise and honor—from King Nebuchadnezzar himself.

	King Nebuchadnezzar	Babylonian diviners	Daniel
Daniel 2:3–4	I dreamed and I want to know	You tell us dream and we interpret	
Daniel 2:5–7	Make known dream and interpretation . . . or else	You tell us dream and we interpret	
Daniel 2:8–11	Tell me dream so I can trust your interpretation	No one can do it No king ever asked it No one could do it . . . except gods	
Daniel 2:26–30	Can you make known dream and interpretation?		No one, specifically the Babylonian diviners, can do it . . . except God

Figure 6. Dialogue reveals Daniel's distinct source of revelation

3.3 *Daniel 2:31–45*

Because our reading lenses are focused on the language and imagery of honor, our reading of the dream and its interpretation diverges from those of most commentators. Rather than trying to unravel the

eschatological imagery and discern the "prophetic" significance of this passage, we notice first its use of the body and of superlatives. Honor is symbolized in the physical body. "The most important part of a person's physical presence is the front, namely, head, face, and eyes," reports Neyrey, while at the other end, "the feet were generally not considered honorable" (Neyrey 1998c:24). So, for example, the initial description of the statue includes several terms of excellence (see Figure 7). That which is described as "extraordinary" or "surpassing" (יתיר) is the statue's "splendor" (NASB), "brightness" (NJPS), or "brilliance" (NRSV). The Aramaic noun being translated by these rather abstract notions is זיו, which is used elsewhere to refer to the face. The "face" of King Belshazzar grows pale and reveals his terror in Daniel 5:6, 9, 10 (see below, Chapter Five, 3.2), as does Daniel's "face" in 7:28. With the help of our anthropological model, understanding the glory of the face is not difficult. As the most honorable part of the body, the face displays the honor of the person behind it. The statue is being described as having a face of excellence, an extraordinarily bright face, a glowing visage, a beacon of glory. The notion of "splendor," therefore, is appropriate, but the Aramaic term focuses attention especially upon the face. The concreteness of the description is noted also in the textual variant found in 4QDan[a], which reads חזוה ("appearance," cf. Dan 7:20) rather than זיוה (DJD 16.244, pl. XXIX; Collins 1993:151).

Daniel 2:31	NASB	NIV	NRSV	NJPS
שגיא	"great"	"large"	"great"	"great"
רב	"large"	"enormous"	"huge"	"huge"
יתיר	"extraordinary"	"dazzling"	"extraordinary"	"surpassing"
דחיל	"awesome"	"awesome"	"frightening"	"awesome"

Figure 7. Vocabulary of excellence in Daniel 2:31

Commentators and others have exerted a great deal of energy attempting to identify the "stone" that destroyed the statue (Dan 2:34, 45). Before the imagery of this "stone cut out without hands" (2:34, 45) gets caught up in speculation about what historical entity will embody this kingdom of God without end—this "fifth monarchy" (cf. Capp 1972)—let us note that there is an aspect of the immediate context that is nicely illuminated by such imagery. In one sense, the description of the stone highlights Daniel's own role in the comparison

between the Judean and foreign traditions. What does it mean for a stone to be cut "not by hands" (2:34, 45)? Smith-Christopher captures an important aspect when he writes that the stone is "not to be associated with any human achievement" (1996:54). Indeed, in the dream's interpretation, Daniel associates the stone not with human achievement but with divine sovereignty (2:44). Thus we again have a comparison, now between a human succession of kingdoms and a kingdom set up by God alone. The latter will crush and remove the former, for the latter is far superior. Likewise, in the contest between the foreign diviners and Daniel, success is achieved not by human ability but by divine favor. The foreign diviners themselves establish this category of comparison by their admission that no one could do what the king asked "except the gods, whose dwelling-place is not with flesh" (2:11), and Daniel emphasizes precisely the divine rather than human origin of his knowledge of the dream and its interpretation (2:27–30). Thus Daniel, like the stone, is not fashioned with human hands—not empowered by the foreign education provided by the king (Dan 1)—but is instead an agent of the divine, a recipient of God's favor, divinely-empowered for God's purposes (2:21–23) (so also Seow 2003b:371–72). The Babylonian diviners think they are able to manipulate and control the times (2:8–9), but a "son of the exile" *shatters* that illusion by his loyalty to the God who ultimately "changes the times and seasons" (2:21); notice the remarkable lexical parallels and resonances between 2:9, עדנא . . . הזן(ד)מנתון ישחנא ("you have agreed [to speak lying and misleading words to me until] the time is changed"), and 2:21, מהשנא עדניא וזמניא ("[God] is the one who changes the times and the seasons") (cf. below, Chapter Five, 3.2). Just as the materials in the statue represent kingdoms which arrogate to themselves the prerogatives of sovereignty that belong only to God, so too the Babylonian diviners operate strictly in the service of one such king. On the other hand, just as the stone which is cut not by hands represents a kingdom of God's sovereignty which duly replaces all lesser imitations, so too Daniel serves to expose their impotence and replace their artifice with his own witness to and demonstration of divine power.

3.4 *Daniel 2:46–49*

The depiction of the king's actions fulfills the expectations for a public verdict following this contest of honor. Having accomplished this

extraordinary deed, excelling where none had even tried before, Daniel is lauded with obeisance; in other words, his claim to worth is fully and excessively acknowledged. Further, the acclaim comes not from a social inferior or a peer, but from the sovereign, King Nebuchadnezzar himself. In a world of limited good (see Chapter One, 3.1.3), for a king to fall on his face and pay homage to anyone else is a remarkable scene, even more striking than the one involving Jesus and John the Baptist, who explained that scene with these words: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30 NRSV; see Neyrey and Rohrbaugh 2001). Nebuchadnezzar's actions speak the Baptist's words—even more loudly. The king's recognition of honor extends beyond Daniel, however, for Daniel had clearly honored his benefactor, the one who provided the solution to this crisis—God. The king heaps praise upon Daniel's God with superlative titles: "God of gods and Lord of kings" (2:47). The king acts appropriately not only by recognizing both Daniel's power and Daniel's patron who provides such power (2:46–47) but also by fulfilling his promise of reward. The king awards Daniel with gifts and promotion to a position of authority (2:48). Here Daniel again demonstrates his righteousness by brokering these gifts to his friends and providing promotions for them as well; "at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the administration of the province of Babylon" (2:49).

This conclusion to the crisis of the dream unfolds exactly as expected in this highly-charged contest of honor. Having performed this difficult feat, Daniel is awarded great honor. "King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face [נפל על אנפוהי] and paid homage [סגד] to Daniel and ordered that sacrifice and incense be offered to him" (2:46). In a chapter filled with superlatives and extreme situations, this is perhaps the most overwrought of all. Commentators have noted the significance of the reversal depicted by the image of a Babylonian potentate lying prostrate before a Jewish exile (Bevan 1892:77; echoed by Montgomery 1927:181 and Collins 1993:172). Further, the king makes a public profession of his new understanding of the hierarchical ordering of the world: "Truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings" (2:47). Not only is Daniel's individual claim to worth acknowledged, but the Judean tradition as a whole is vindicated as Nebuchadnezzar employs the very terms that the Judeans themselves use to praise their God (e.g., Deut 10:17; Ps

136:2–3). Reflecting again on the tale in Daniel 1, we see that rather than Daniel being resocialized to recognize a different heritage, now the king himself comes to recognize Daniel's heritage as superior to his own and Daniel's God as occupying the "top of the ladder." Neither rich food and wine nor specialized training in the Babylonian divinatory arts provides the power to accomplish feats, but rather the Judean God does, and Nebuchadnezzar recognizes this God's power as "revealer of mysteries" (2:47, גלה רזין), just as Daniel knows and has described God (2:29). In the tale of Daniel 4, the king will further come to recognize this God's power as one who "deposes kings and establishes kings" (2:21; see 4:14, 21, 29 [4:17, 24, 32 Eng.]). Readers are left to wonder which direction the acculturation really worked—who influenced whom? The king's efforts to bring exiled and enslaved Judeans into the orbit of his sovereignty instead find the king himself not only under the sovereignty of the Judean God but positively acknowledging it as well!

4 *Summary*

Analysis of Daniel 2 according to the social-science model of honor focusses attention on the comparison between Daniel and the Babylonian diviners. As a limited good, honor sparks competition, and rather than attend exclusively to Daniel's change in status, this approach notices the employment of challenge and riposte as the vehicle for this competition. The tale separates Daniel and his companions from the Babylonian diviners and allows readers to compare the two groups as they face the challenge of the king's dream. Indeed, Daniel bears comparison not only with the diviners but with the king himself. The Babylonian diviners fail in their engagement with the king's challenge and are placed under his order of death, while Daniel successfully meets the king's challenge and saves not only himself and his fellow Judeans but also the Babylonian sages from the king's order of death. A second-century Judean audience facing the challenges of Hellenism and living under the threat of death for their resistance to the Seleucid rulers (see 1 Macc 1:62–63) would find in such a tale a welcome depiction of God's provision in the midst of such difficult circumstances.

Daniel's recognition of God's provision is, for Daniel, an exercise in the virtue of righteousness. The ability of the various characters

in Daniel 2 to exhibit the virtues is central among the criteria by which the comparison proceeds. The tale employs *encomium*-like descriptions of virtue to paint a portrait of Daniel that contrasts sharply with that of the Babylonian diviners. His prudence and self-control run counter to their ill-conceived and ultimately fruitless engagement with the king. His temperance runs counter to the king's furious rage and rash actions. And Daniel's wisdom shines a light of knowledge into the darkness that surrounds the king's dream and the diviners' inability to know it or interpret it.

Indeed, Daniel is presented as winning honor through many means. The comparison between Daniel and the Babylonians clearly favors Daniel. The report of his accomplishment of an impossible deed bestows honor upon him. His successful handling of the king's challenge, especially in comparison to the Babylonians' failure, wins him honor. And within the story itself, Daniel wins the rewards and honor promised by the king for solving the crisis of the dream. Throughout, the prominent virtue exhibited by Daniel is righteousness, as he not only shares his reward with his companions but, more importantly, he gives credit to God for providing him with what is necessary for his success.

Even in the contents and interpretation of the dream, this comparison is brought out. Rather than attending to the eschatology or prophetic import of the dream and its interpretation, our social-scientific approach notices the superlatives and indications of excellence in the description of the statue. We also find that the "stone cut out without hands" (2:34, 45) is yet another way to emphasize the reliance of Daniel and the Judeans upon the favor of God rather than any human provision. For a second-century audience, the message is clear: excellence comes by the patronage of God. Their patron-client relationship with this God of their ancestors is therefore not to be abandoned in the face of Hellenistic domination but indeed is an incomparable resource to be relied upon.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENVY: DANIEL 3 AND 6

Daniel 3 and 6 are perhaps the best-known tales in the compilation. The stories about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions' den have had their themes and characters featured in depictions that range from ancient synagogue mosaics (lions' den, Collins 1993:273) to early Christian catacomb art (lions' den, Snyder 1985:49–50; fiery furnace, Snyder 1985:54–55) to the present-day animated children's video series *VeggieTales* (lions' den, "Where's God When I'm S-scared?" [1994]; fiery furnace, "Rack, Shack, and Benny" [1995]). They have much more in common than simply their popularity, however. These tales also share a common structure as tales of "court conflict" (compare to "court contest," see Chapter Three, 1.2; Collins 1984:55, 71–72; Wills 1990:142–44). In both tales, as well as in similar ones like Esther and *Ahiqar*, the basic plot involves a hero (or heroes) who begins in a state of prosperity but who is endangered, often by conspiracy, and condemned to death or prison before eventually being delivered and exalted again to a position of high status (Collins 1993:192; cf. Laniak 1998:8–15). These tales serve to continue the comparison between the Babylonian and the Judean traditions by demonstrating the victory of one over the other in a contest fueled by envy.

1 *The Text*

1.1 *Daniel 3*

Daniel 3 is the one tale in the compilation that features Daniel's three companions while Daniel himself is absent from the narrative. It likely circulated independently, as did a simple version of Daniel in the lions' den (Collins 1993:262–64), before the two similar tales with different heroes were incorporated (along with the likewise similar tale of Bel and the Dragon) into the larger book of Daniel (see Wills 1990:134–38). The specific narrative elements of the two tales may be summarized briefly according to the five components of the court conflict.

First, the heroes begin in a state of prosperity. Daniel 3:12 specifies that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego held administrative positions in the province of Babylon. Indeed, they have been appointed to their high posts by the king himself—Nebuchadnezzar in this tale.

Second, the heroes are subsequently endangered, often by some conspiracy. Daniel 3:1–7 describes the setting and prepares the situation in which the three Judeans will find themselves in crisis. Nebuchadnezzar, to whom the text imputes no intention of creating a conflict for the Judeans, sets up an image of superior proportions that thereby symbolizes his honor. He then assembles a distinguished and honorable audience of officials in order to elicit a grant of honor in the form of their acknowledgment—indeed, "worship" (סגד)—of this grand image. He orders their obeisance on pain of death, threatening those who refuse with being thrown into a flaming furnace (3:6). The text narrates conspiracy against the heroes when a group of Chaldeans reports that the three Judeans are not complying with the king's order (3:8–12).

Third, the heroes are condemned to death. Nebuchadnezzar summons the Judeans and questions them, providing them an opportunity to acquiesce and worship the image but also repeating the threat of death in the furnace (3:13–15). The tale puts an important question in the mouth of the king himself, who wonders what god can deliver (שיזב) them out of his hands (3:15). This question both foreshadows their eventual deliverance and identifies the heart of the conflict and the comparison—between the Judean God and the Babylonian king who puts himself in the place that rightfully belongs only to God. The three Judeans confess their loyalty to their God and refuse to meet the king's demands (3:16–18), whereupon Nebuchadnezzar orders the furnace heated excessively and commands that the three Judeans be thrown in (3:19–23).

Fourth, the heroes are delivered. Daniel 3:24–27 tells of this deliverance, but not from the narrator's point of view. Rather, the reader is presented this extraordinary situation piece by piece and therefore slowly apprehends the incredible scene along with the astonished king. Nebuchadnezzar verifies that three men were thrown in (3:24) and then reveals that he now sees four (3:25). He calls the three men out (3:26) and, along with the same distinguished and honorable audience of officials whom he had gathered to observe his honor, he observes the untouched condition of the Judeans (3:27). Finally, it is again not the narrator but the king himself who identifies the

savior of this deliverance: the God of the Judeans, who sent an angel to deliver these loyal clients (3:28).

Fifth, the heroes are exalted once again. The king not only causes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to prosper (צלח; 3:30), but he also recognizes and acknowledges the honor properly due to their God (3:29).

1.2 *Daniel 6*

In Daniel 6 the hero faces a similar crisis, with the same five movements, and likewise not only receives vindication from his God but also wins honor on behalf of that God. First, Daniel begins in a state of prosperity. The king—Darius in this tale—has appointed Daniel as one of three regents in charge over 120 satraps throughout the whole kingdom (6:2–3 [6:1–2 Eng.]). As Daniel distinguishes himself (נצח) by virtue of his excellent spirit (רוח יתירא), the king plans to place him alone over the entire kingdom (6:4 [6:3 Eng.]).

Second, Daniel's position is endangered by conspiracy when the other regents and satraps conspire to find fault with Daniel. They convince the king to issue an ordinance that they know Daniel will violate. The king, again acting without the intention of creating a conflict for Daniel, issues an decree banning for thirty days, on pain of death, the making of a petition to any god or man other than the king (6:5–10 [6:4–9 Eng.]). As expected, Daniel violates the decree (6:11 [6:10 Eng.]), and his violation is duly reported to the king by his conspirators (6:12–16 [6:11–15 Eng.]).

Third, Daniel is condemned to death. Darius, though chagrined at the situation and wishing instead that he himself could somehow deliver (שיזב) Daniel (6:15 [6:14 Eng.]), nevertheless gives the order for Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den (6:17–19 [6:16–18 Eng.]). It is once again the king who utters the thematic statement of the tale, declaring that none but Daniel's God is to deliver (שיזב) Daniel (6:17 [6:16 Eng.]).

Fourth, Daniel is delivered. The king rushes to the lions' den the following morning as the deliverance is revealed to the reader again slowly and with the same tension the king himself feels (6:20–25 [6:19–24 Eng.]). The king calls out, and he is pleased to hear Daniel's voice in response. Daniel relates God's provision of an angel who protected him, and he is found to have no injury when he is brought out of the den.

Fifth, Daniel and his God are exalted. No specific promotion is mentioned for Daniel, but there is clearly a demotion for those who conspired against him—they are thrown into the den and promptly devoured by the lions (6:25 [6:24 Eng.]). Daniel is said to "prosper" (צלח; 6:29 [6:28 Eng.]), but the focus of the exaltation is on Daniel's God, who, in a doxology written and promulgated by the foreign king, is praised as one who delivers (שיזב; 6:26–28 [6:25–27 Eng.]).

2 *The Model*

2.1 *Envy*

The themes of honor we have seen before—excellence, loyalty, vindication—appear again in these tales. Driving the action, however, is another aspect of an honor culture—envy. Envy has been studied from an anthropological perspective (Foster 1972) which has in turn been enhanced by the study of ancient sources for use in interpreting ancient texts (Malina and Seeman 1998; Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998; Neyrey and Rohrbaugh 2001; Malina 2001a:108–33). A summary of this important social motivation is necessary before proceeding with the reading of Daniel 3 and Daniel 6. The model outlined here includes a definition of envy, what is envied and why, who does it and how.

Aristotle provides a clear definition of envy in the ancient world. In part, Aristotle specifies "a certain kind of distress at apparent success on the part of one's peers" (*Rhet.* 2.10.1, from G. Kennedy 1991:158–59). A brief explanation of a number of the supporting elements in the surrounding matrix makes this definition even fuller. For example, the ancients distinguish envy from jealousy (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:17–20; Malina 2001a:126–28; though in popular usage today we tend not to distinguish these two terms, their distinction is captured by the *OED*—see "envy" [5.316] and "jealousy" [8.206–07]). In a broad sense, "envy" (φθόνος) carries negative connotations, while "jealousy" (ζῆλος) carries positive connotations; "thus emulation [ζῆλος] is a good thing and characteristic of good people, while envy [φθόνος] is bad and characteristic of the bad" (*Rhet.* 2.11.1, from G. Kennedy 1991:161). More specifically, the nature of envy is aggressive in response to the success of others. The nature of jealousy in response to the success of others is competitive and assertive, but in a positive sense, sparking not an attempt to impair

the other but to improve oneself (hence G. Kennedy's rendering of ζῆλος as "emulation" in *Rhet.* 2.11 [1991:160–62]). "Jealousy" also carries positive connotations when it operates in response to one's own success. Often translated "zeal," this form of jealousy is defensive, seeking to protect one's own possessions, whether of material value (e.g., house) or of social value (e.g., honor) (see Seeman 1998). The particular characteristics of each of these terms can be plotted on a chart with attention to the aggressive, assertive, or defensive nature of each and whether it arises in response to one's own success or another's (see Figure 8; cf. Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:19). Malina articulates the distinction this way:

> Envy [φθόνος] refers to the sentiment of begrudging the success of another. . . . Jealousy [ζῆλος] has two dimensions. The first is a sort of defensive jealousy [also called "zeal"] that emerges when the well-being of whom [*sic*] or what one holds dear is threatened. The second is assertive jealousy [also called "emulation"] that surfaces in rivalry or competition that benefits one's in-group. (2001a:126)

The Semitic terms that cover this same semantic field (קנא, often "jealousy," also "envy"; חמד, traditionally "covet," also "envy") are not used in Daniel 1–6, but the envy operative there becomes apparent with the help of the thorough descriptions from Aristotle and other ancient corroborators of the modern anthropological model.

in response to:	another's success (what you "have not")	one's own success (what you "have")
aggressive	φθόνος "envy"	
assertive	ζῆλος "jealousy" ("emulation")	
defensive		ζῆλος "jealousy" ("zeal")

Figure 8. Distinguishing "envy" from "jealousy"

Examining what is envied and why helps to explain the "success" and the "distress" mentioned by Aristotle (*Rhet.* 2.10.1, see above). The link between one's success and another's envy is commonly recognized and can be illustrated by testimony of the ancients themselves (see Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:25–26; Neyrey and Rohrbaugh

2001:468–81). For example, in his *Life* (122), the ancient Jewish historian Josephus reports on a rival who, "believing that my success involved his own ruin, gave way to immoderate envy [φθόνος]." Elsewhere, Josephus explains that "these successes of John [Hyrcanus] and of his sons made them be envied [φθόνος]" (*J.W.* 1.67, from Whiston 1987:584). To understand why one's success leads to another's envy, however, we must turn to our social-scientific understanding of ancient society. Our model of honor (see Chapter One, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4) indicates that, like all resources, honor was perceived as a limited good in the ancient world (see Foster 1972:168–69). Therefore, seen in terms of a zero-sum game, one person's gain of honor *necessarily* entails another's loss of honor. Further, the resulting concern to protect and maintain one's honor produces an undercurrent of potential conflict in social interactions, which is characteristic of an agonistic culture (Foster 1965). Given this setting, it is clear that one's rise in honor easily provokes the concern of others, who fear that the one is gaining honor at their expense (the work of Neyrey and Rohrbaugh [2001] deals precisely with this connection between the perception of limited good and the arousal of envy; see also Malina and Seeman 1998:60–61).

This concern, or "distress," to use Aristotle's term, is the envy that leads one to take action against whoever is gaining honor. One who "is seen or known to acquire more becomes much more vulnerable to the envy of his neighbors" (Foster 1972:169). Such envy is borne out by aggressive action against the one who is envied. In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Simeon warns his sons against envy. "For envy dominates the whole of man's mind and does not permit him to eat or drink or to do anything good. Rather it keeps prodding him to destroy the one whom he envies. Whenever the one who is envied flourishes, the envious one languishes" (*T. Sim.* 3.2–3, from Kee 1983:786). The object of envy is what Aristotle terms "success," which is an expression of honor. As a social commodity, honor is not a physical possession like money or awards but rather the public recognition those things represent. "Thus 'success' earns an honorable reputation, which becomes the object of envy" (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:27). Like honor challenges, envy takes place typically among social equals—"one's peers," as Aristotle puts it (*Rhet.* 2.10.1). Envy of another who is of lower status, like that of a king directed toward the leading men of his kingdom, as we find in Daniel 3, is more akin to the jealous protection of honor against

potential rivals than the envy of a peer's honor (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:30–32).

Scholars have identified six ways in which one may act against another whom one envies. The list includes (1) ostracism, (2) gossip and slander, (3) feuding, (4) litigation, (5) the evil eye, and (6) homicide (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:32–34, followed by Neyrey and Rohrbaugh 2001:478–79). Attempts at physical violence and even homicide are not foreign to the biblical tradition, as Cain's killing of Abel and Saul's attempts on David's life demonstrate (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:32–34; Neyrey 1998c:19). Envy appears to motivate these actions, for example, as Cain reacts to the success of Abel's sacrifice (Gen 4:3–8). (The text of Gen 4:1 explains Cain's name, קין, as if it were derived from the Hebrew verb, קנה, "to create, or acquire," which bears remarkable similarity and assonance with קנא, "to be jealous, or envious.") Likewise, Saul is distressed at David's success (1 Sam 18:6–8) and not only casts the evil eye upon him (1 Sam 18:9; cf. Neyrey and Rohrbaugh 2001:472, 478–79; Elliott 1991a:152) but also makes several attempts on David's life (1 Sam 18:10–11, 19:11, etc.). Joseph's brothers are said to "envy" (קנא) him when he tells them of the dreams that portend his future success (Gen 37:11), and they promptly conspire to kill him (Gen 37:18–20). The tales in Daniel 3 and 6 likewise feature this extreme manifestation of envy: conspiracy to attempt homicide.

2.2 *Labelling and Deviance Theory*

These tales also feature envious attempts to dishonor Daniel and his companions by litigation. Attention to labelling and deviance theory helps us understand the dynamics of these negative honor challenges even more clearly. Again, not only has labelling and deviance been studied from an anthropological perspective (e.g., Garfinkel 1956; Pfuhl 1980), but those studies have been adapted and applied to the interpretation of biblical texts (e.g., Malina and Neyrey 1988:34–67, 1991a, and 1996:183–87). Labelling is a device used to assist the public, including readers of a text, to evaluate and categorize persons both negatively and positively (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:99). Negatively, it can be used in social conflicts as a weapon to designate someone as "out of place," a definition of deviance. A group's perception of the structure of the world results in a purity system, with social maps of persons, places, times, and things (Neyrey 1991b;

see above, Chapter Two, 2.2). To be "out of place" is to be in violation of the shared perceptions of proper boundaries (cf. Malina and Neyrey 1996:183–86). Labelling and deviance theory pays particular attention to those who do the labelling, because it is *their* interests which are perceived to be threatened by the deviant behavior, and it is their perception of threat which leads them to engage in labelling (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:100). The object of the deviance labelling is to dishonor the perceived offender, to destroy that one's previous identity and replace it with the label "deviant" and its attendant degraded status (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:107).

The anthropological model identifies both who does the labelling and how they execute the "deviance process" (Pfuhl 1980; Malina and Neyrey 1991a:102–07). Those who are "likely to initiate a deviance process and to mobilize forces to make it successful. . . . tend to be people privy to the making and enforcing of societal rules" (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:102). These "rule creators" work to draw, or redraw, boundaries and then disseminate their viewpoint and enhance the value of the resulting perception of what is positive (pure, sacred, etc.) and negative (polluted, evil, dangerous, etc.).

To define someone as deviant, then, involves three elements: "(a) denunciation, (b) retrospective interpretation, and (c) status degradation ritual" (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:104–07). Denunciation attempts to portray the perpetrator as so far removed from the group's core values that refusal to condemn him serves instead to positively accept the evil, dangerous, and threatening trait with which the perpetrator is identified. Denouncers and witnesses must be publicly known and able to speak in the name of the core values that are threatened by the deviant perpetrator. Retrospective interpretation refers to the process of reviewing selected aspects of the alleged deviant's history and character in order both to lend weight to the present accusation and to reinterpret past traits and actions in the light of this newly-applied "deviant" label. If successful, this process affirms (1) the perpetrator's responsibility for the deviant action, (2) the intentional injury inflicted by the action, and (3) the action's victim, and finally (4) leads to condemnation of the accused. This affirms the honor of the condemners and justifies the labelling and the condemnation "by appeal to some higher order norm: God's will, the good of the people, the honor of the nation" (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:107). The culminating status degradation ritual completes the transition in label and status, resolving the conflict by totally removing the accused

one's honorable identity and status and replacing them with a deviant identity and degraded status.

Not all deviance processes are successful, however, and attempts to label someone as deviant can be interrupted and overturned (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:108–09). One strategy to combat the deviance process is alternative retrospective interpretation. Here, each of the crucial elements is reversed to favor the accused deviant. Thus, there can be a denial of responsibility, a denial of injury, or a denial of the victim. In the latter case, the supposed victim is made to be the deviant and the actions of the accused, though admittedly rule-breaking, are nonetheless justified. Further, the deviance process can be interrupted by condemnation of the condemners. "By condemning the condemners, it becomes an honor to have been rejected and condemned by such 'morally reprehensible' people. . . . This technique redirects the negative sanctions and condemnation from the deviant to the rule enforcers" (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:109). Finally, one can appeal to higher loyalties in order to explain and justify one's rule-breaking action as the result of a choice forced by role conflict.

> The choice of one set of values, demands, or expectations entails the violation of another. The violated values, demands or expectations are then defined as being of lesser importance, while the ones followed are defined as being of greater importance for a host of reason: time constraints, God's will, value to others, etc. (Malina and Neyrey 1991a:109)

Many of the elements of the deviance process and the strategies for interrupting and reversing it are useful for interpreting the tale of Daniel 6.

3 *The Reading*

3.1 *Daniel 3*

The motivation of the Chaldeans who accuse the three Judeans in Daniel 3:8–12 is not made explicit. When Josephus retells the tale, he specifies "envy" (φθόνος) as that which endangers the Judeans (*Ant.* 10.212), though envy is not specifically mentioned in the biblical text as a cause for the action against the Judeans. There are sufficient clues, both in this tale as well as in its context in the compilation of Daniel 1–6, for modern commentators to sense the motivation of the Chaldean accusers intuitively. For example, Collins writes that

"their motivation presumably involved resentment" at the appointment of these Judeans over themselves, as noted in 3:12 (1993:186). Hartman and Di Lella find it "implied" in 3:12 that "their primary motive in making the accusation was professional jealousy" (1978:161). These intuitive readings, corroborated by Josephus but expressed by scholars so tentatively ("presumably," "implied"), find both a firm grounding and a more precise treatment in a reading that employs our social-science model. The use of the model helps ground commentators' presumptions by corroborating the presence and describing the operations of the social dynamics narrated in the texts. The model provides more precision in the treatment by identifying the dynamics at work not by *ad hoc* terms like "resentment" or "professional jealousy," but by the term defined precisely above (2.1)—"envy."

The placement of this tale in the compilation following the tale of Daniel 2 provides a context that emphasizes envy as the motivation. First, the use of the term "Chaldeans" indicates not the Babylonians in general but rather the divinatory specialists (Collins 1993:186; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:161; contra Kuhl 1930:20). Second, given the recent failure—and hence, dishonor—of those very specialists upon the occasion of Daniel's and his companions' success during the crisis of the king's dream (narrated in the previous tale, Dan 2), readers are prepared for an attempt by the Chaldeans to rehabilitate their honor. Surely a second-century Judean audience would understand the motivation clearly without the need of an explicit mention of its name. To the extent that our model of honor and of envy's role in an honor culture is accurate, we can be confident that readers in that world would not only understand the action of the Chaldeans but would positively expect it.

More is at stake in Daniel 3 than the blemished honor of the Chaldean diviners, however. The tale opens with the king's attempt to create an ostentatious display of his honor (Dan 3:1–7). Commentators are virtually unanimous in their estimation of the dimensions of Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue as excessive and exaggerated to the point of being unrealistically awkward (Collins 1993:181; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:160–61; Towner 1984:49). Such exceptional and extraordinary dimensions are in keeping with the message the king is attempting to communicate, however, for such an extravagant use of wealth is designed to replicate the honor of its maker. Following Aristotle's lead (*Rhet.* 2.16.1), Neyrey explains that

> those who display wealth claim honor because they are "ostentatious and pretentious." . . . Wealth, then, symbolizes one's status to friends and neighbors; it claims for its possessors respect and worth as powerful persons who act as patrons to others and who deserve to rule. But wealth is not wealth and cannot symbolize one's worth and honor unless it is displayed. (1998c:23–24)

Nebuchadnezzar's enormous golden statue certainly serves to display his claim to worth and to rule (Collins reviews the numerous ancient parallels that scholars have compiled for comparison [1993:180–83]).

Our definition of honor, however, specifies one further condition before the equation is complete. Namely, one's claim must be made publicly in order to receive the approbation of an audience. Pitt-Rivers provides this concise definition: "Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride" (1977:1, emphasis his). Malina phrases it similarly: "Honor is a claim to worth along with the *social acknowledgment* of worth" (2001a:30, emphasis mine). Seeking public acknowledgment, then, Nebuchadnezzar not only sets up the statue but also arranges for an audience to provide appropriate recognition. Of course, the audience consists of the kingdom's elite, those who have high status and great honor themselves. Their acknowledgment of Nebuchadnezzar's *even greater* honor helps to affirm the hierarchical "pecking order" at the top of which Nebuchadnezzar acts to maintain his position. The king thus orders the gathering of a long list of rulers and regents, and readers are reminded of their credentials each time the long list is repeated (3:2, 3; the listing in 3:27 is slightly abbreviated). The king then provides them with an "ostentatious and pretentious" ceremony by which to express their public acknowledgment. At the sound of musical instruments (again, a long list that is repeated frequently: 3:5, 7, 10, 15), all the people are to fall down (נפל) and worship (סגד) the statue (the language echoes Nebuchadnezzar's own response to Daniel in 2:46).

If everyone acts according to expectations, the ceremony serves to confirm the roles and statuses of the various participants, including Nebuchadnezzar's supreme role and the loyal clientage of his administrators. Nebuchadnezzar's honor finds expression not only in the ostentatious statue and the acknowledgment of an elite audience, but also in the compliance of those to whom he gives commands. The

Judeans, however, do not act as expected (3:12) (cf. Brensinger 2002). Their refusal to worship the statue challenges Nebuchadnezzar's claim to honor and to rule. He responds by reasserting his claim (giving the Judeans another chance to comply, 3:13–15) and then fulfilling his threat (ordering the furnace to be stoked and the Judeans to be cast in, 3:19–23). If the king's claim to honor will not be acknowledged, then it will be demonstrated by his prompt revenge for this affront (for the positive approbation of revenge given by the ancient world, see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9.24).

Nebuchadnezzar's response follows the course that is expected from one who is jealous for his honor. Chris Seeman describes three steps by which jealousy operates, beginning with a "perceived injury or affront to one's honor" (1998:210–11). Unfortunately for Nebuchadnezzar, the elite audience and elaborate ceremony that he had designed for his own glory now serves as witness to this affront from the Judeans. Thus, the second step follows quickly, surely, and in extreme measure upon Nebuchadnezzar's perception of the affront. The text emphasizes the "rage" and "anger" (רגז, חמא, 3:13, taken as hendiadys, "furious anger" [Collins 1993:149, 157, 177, 186], "furious rage" [Goldingay 1989:64]; חמא, 3:19) which are sparked in Nebuchadnezzar's reaction. This "ignition" of jealousy "is invariably conceptualized through metaphors of fire, heat, indignation, wrath, provocation and the like" (Seeman 1998:211). Indeed, the seven-fold increase in the heat of the furnace (3:19) symbolically participates in the king's enkindled rage and consuming indignation (consuming even those who cast in the Judeans, 3:22). The third step is the retaliatory action of fulfilling the threat, stoking the furnace and casting in the offenders (3:23).

The motivation for the Judeans' nonconformity is surely the same as Daniel's in the tale of the food rejection (1:8, see above, Chapter Two). They understand themselves to be facing a choice between offering loyalty to a foreign king as Patron or maintaining loyalty to their Judean Patron-God. Why are their situations perceived as presenting them with a mutually-exclusive either/or choice? Why can they not work for the foreign king and pray to their native God (cf. Dan 6, below) at the same time? The answer is provided for us in our model of honor as a limited good (Foster 1965; see above, Chapter One, 3.1.3). To give honor to one is to take honor from another. Further, with religion embedded in politics (see below), the foreign king and the native God stand to gain or lose (honor, power,

clients, etc.) within the same, single, limited arena of political religion. In the same way that the three Judeans and Daniel reject the king's food and education in Daniel 1, here they reject the king's claim to honor.

Again, this appears to modern sensibilities to be a religious conflict, especially when the Chaldean accusers combine the charge of not worshiping Nebuchadnezzar's statue with one of not serving Nebuchadnezzar's gods (3:12). However, in the ancient world religion was not freestanding but was bound up in kinship (domestic religion) and politics (political religion) and was thus inseparable from ethnic identity, traditional heritage, and collective honor (see Malina 1996b and 2001b:91–94; Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:397–98; Elliott 1991b; Hanson and Oakman 1998:131–59). Recall Malina's image of a ladder on whose rungs stand those who control one's existence (2001a:30; see above, Chapter Two, 3.1). Religion concerns the proper respect and homage due to those on the ladder, including the God or gods at the top of the ladder. Because religion was embedded in politics, we are not to think of separate ladders, one for the hierarchy of the state and another for the hierarchy of the religious establishment; rather, the two were one and the same. The conflict narrated in Daniel 3 thus cannot properly be described as a "religious conflict" pure and simple, for there was no "religion" pure and simple. Neither does it operate in the sphere of "domestic religion"; rather, it exemplifies the ancient world's "political religion"—religion embedded in politics and practiced in the public arena. An act of political treason is likewise an act of irreligion; an act of heterodox religiosity is likewise an act of subversive politics. The Judeans are facing a choice as much between two distinctive "political" entities—the Judean and the Babylonian—as between two distinctive "religious" entities—the Judean God and the foreign gods. The Judeans would dishonor their God by doing obeisance to another deity, and they refuse to do so. They prefer instead to dishonor Nebuchadnezzar and his gods (3:18), believing that their loyalty to the Judean God will be vindicated by that God's deliverance (שיזב) of them from the foreign king's claim upon them (3:17).

God does indeed vindicate these loyal clients by delivering them from the flames of the furnace. In the contest between Nebuchadnezzar and the Judean God, God clearly wins and is granted the public glory due the victor. By providing an angel to protect the Judeans (3:28), God neutralizes Nebuchadnezzar's ability to carry out his

threat against them, just as God's revelation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel allowed Daniel to neutralize the king's threat in the previous tale (Dan 2:24; see above, Chapter Three, 3.2.5). And this powerful deliverance, impossible for humans (cf. Dan 2:10–11), is performed in the presence of the same illustrious audience that Nebuchadnezzar had convened to witness to *his own* glory (3:27). Nebuchadnezzar himself has no choice but to acknowledge God's power and glory. He recognizes not only the Judeans' righteous exercise of loyalty (3:28) but also their God's ability to deliver (נצל) (3:29). Reasserting his position now *near* the top, if no longer at the top, of the pecking order, Nebuchadnezzar makes a decree against blaspheming the Judeans' God and reinforces it with a new threat (3:29). Now the honor of the Judean God—not that of Nebuchadnezzar and his gods—is protected by royal decree and threat. Conditions have been reversed for the three Judeans. They have moved from a state of prosperity through condemnation and back to vindicated exaltation. Nebuchadnezzar, too, has experienced a reversal. His plans for the acknowledgment of his own honor were turned into an acknowledgment of God's honor by the divine deliverance of three challengers whom he threatened to kill. A day designed to redound to the foreign king's honor instead finds him publicly acclaiming the honor of the Judean God.

3.2 *Daniel 6*

3.2.1 *Envy and Honor*

In Daniel 6, too, the motivation for the conspirators is not explicitly labeled "envy," but the narrative leaves no room for mistaking its clear operation. As with Daniel 3, critical comment on Daniel 6 sometimes finds its way to envy, but without a definition or model by which to explain it or understand its operation (e.g., the speculative discussion of Lacocque focuses on "envy" [1979:110]). Goldingay, for example, comments from within his own contemporary industrialized Western milieu and therefore remarks that "why [the conspirators] decide to subvert Daniel's position is only vaguely explained. . . . There is behind [it] the mysterious, perverse antagonism toward what is good that people sometimes manifest" (1989:130). Second-century Judean readers, however, did not share the modern industrialized context of Goldingay's comment, and attention to their ancient setting finds the conspirators' motivation not at all vague

and their "antagonism toward what is good" not at all mysterious, nor perverse.

The key notion that makes the difference between contemporary Western perception and ancient Mediterranean perception is the image of limited good (Foster 1965), a notion we have invoked several times already (see above, Chapter One, 3.1.3). George Foster's description of the role of limited good in the arousal of envy allows us to reassess Goldingay's suggestion of mystery and perversity in this antagonism toward what is good: "any advantage achieved by one individual or family is seen as a loss to others, and the person who makes what the Western world lauds as 'progress' is viewed as a threat to the stability of the entire community" (Foster 1972:169). Our ancient informants (quoted with emphasis added) corroborate this anthropological perspective: "envy is a certain kind of *distress* at apparent *success* on the part of one's peers in attaining the *good things* that have been mentioned" (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.10.1, from G. Kennedy 1991:158–59); "envy is *distress* incurred by reason of a neighbor's *prosperity*" (Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.8.17); "envy is *pain* at another's *good*" (Plutarch, *Garr.* 518C; see also *Inv. od.* 537A). Anselm Hagedorn and Jerome Neyrey summarize the situation nicely:

> If supply is thought to be radically limited, any person's gain must come through loss by others. . . . Hence, if someone gains success, goods, honor or anything valued by a group, then others correspondingly perceive themselves losing worth, prestige and the like. Envy follows as surely as night follows day. (1998:21)

When read with sensitivity to this ancient perception of limited good, there is neither mystery nor perversity in the biblical text's movement from one sentence describing Daniel's success to the next sentence describing his peers' conspiracy against him. The NIV translation captures the movement well: "Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel" (Dan 6:4–5 [6:3–4 Eng.])—as surely as night follows day.

In conversation with an explicit model of envy, the text of Daniel 6 is greatly illuminated. The text identifies who envies whom. Daniel 6:2–3 [6:1–2 Eng.] introduces 120 satraps appointed over the kingdom by King Darius; they in turn have three regents appointed over them, one of whom is Daniel. Further, the text identifies what is

envied and why. Daniel 6:4 [6:3 Eng.] explains much in few words. Daniel is said to "distinguish himself" (נצח) over both the other regents as well as the satraps. This excellence is attributed to Daniel's "extraordinary spirit" (רוח יתירא). The NJPS translation reads: "This man Daniel surpassed the other ministers and satraps by virtue of his extraordinary spirit," and ties this surpassing excellence to the king's decision to appoint Daniel over the entire kingdom. Hartman and Di Lella (1978:192) make the connection even more explicit: "But Daniel, because of the extraordinary spirit that was in him, so outshone the other chief ministers and the satraps, that the king was inclined to set him over the whole kingdom" (Dan 6:4 [6:3 Eng.]). Towner recognizes that this "superb performance of Daniel . . . brought forth the inevitable jealousy from the other two presidents and the one hundred twenty satraps" (1984:80) but then follows André Lacocque in speculation about other motivations for their action (Towner 1984:81). According to the precision of our model, what inevitably follows Daniel's excellence is not "jealousy" but "envy" (see above, 2.1). Daniel's peers are provoked to envy because his reputation is beginning to exceed theirs, and this situation, perceived through the image of limited good, leads to his gain of honor at their expense. Not only is their loss perceived in terms of reputation, but it is about to be instituted by the king in the form of a new role and higher status for Daniel, who would be elevated to a position where he would receive obeisance and acknowledgment from the other officials. Just as in the similar situation in Genesis 37:5–11, where Joseph's dreams presage his brothers' bowing to him, such a possibility ignites "envy" (קנא, Gen 37:11).

The next section of the tale describes how the envy of these rivals plays out against Daniel. They first attempt to use litigation or slander against Daniel, but they can find no grounds for accusing him of any wrongdoing with regard to his governmental duties: "they could find no grounds for complaint or any corruption, because he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption could be found in him" (6:5 [6:4 Eng.] NRSV). This comes as no surprise, since Daniel has already been identified as excelling in his administrative post. The conspirators then hope to exploit Daniel's loyalty to the Judean tradition and its God in order to bring charges against him (6:6 [6:5 Eng.]). Thus they contrive a law which they know will cause a conflict with Daniel's loyalty to the Judean God. Here, as in Daniel 3, the

perception of limited good forces an either/or dilemma; Daniel cannot honor two masters with his loyalty, because to give honor to one is to take honor from another (as Jesus recognizes in Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13 [see Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:380–81]). Further, they will not be satisfied with slander or litigation but attempt to use these tools for homicide: the law carries a penalty of death in the lions' den (6:7–10 [6:6–9 Eng.]). Daniel is to be removed entirely.

Ironically, their scheme depends precisely upon Daniel's demonstration of the very virtuous character that they seek to undermine by their envious conspiracy. That is, they count on Daniel's continued loyalty to his God, which is an exercise in the virtue of righteousness (or justice, δικαιοσύνη; see above, Chapter Three, 3.2.3). They are not disappointed. As expected, Daniel chooses to remain loyal to his God and continue his demonstrations of piety (6:11–12 [6:10–11 Eng.]); and as expected, they bring charges against Daniel before the king (6:13–14 [6:12–13 Eng.]). The text's literary indication of the force of this either/or predicament is striking. "Two דתות oppose each other, the one as imperative as the other: there is Daniel's Law (v. 6 [better, the law of his God, דת אלהה]) and there is the 'immutable, irrevocable, and unchangeable' law of the Medes and Persians (vv. 9, 16 [and 13, דת מדי ופרס])" (Lacocque 1979:111).

Sensitivity to the dynamics of envy at work in Daniel 6 is also helpful in addressing the vexing problem of how to understand הרנשו, the rare verb used in 6:7, 12, and 16 [6:6, 11, and 15 Eng.] to describe the activities of the conspirators. The term was translated in a variety of ways already in the ancient versions, and the variety exists not only between versions but also among the different occurrences within a single version (helpfully charted by Montgomery 1927:272). Perhaps the Aramaic verb was perceived as obscure, for the versions tend to employ some verb that is both more common and more specific in its indication of the action. Thus, in the setting of 6:12 [6:11 Eng.], when the conspirators are spying on Daniel, the versions use a verb with connotations that are appropriate for such a scene (e.g., Th uses παρετήρησαν; the Syriac uses ܢܛܪܘ [*nṭrw*]) but that do not fit the Aramaic term's use in 6:7 [6:6 Eng.] or 6:16 [6:15 Eng.]. What is preserved in those cases—and heightened, especially in 6:12 [6:11 Eng.]—is the negative connotation of conspiracy. Theodotion's use of the verb παρατηρέω ("to watch") finds its counterpart in Mark 3:2 (and Luke 6:7), where the situation again involves a conspiracy of envy: "They watched him to see whether he would cure him on

the sabbath, so that they might accuse him" (Mark 3:2 NRSV; see Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:45–47).

Three different proposals predominate among English translators and commentators. First, many take the Aramaic verb to indicate a large group: they "went as a group" (NIV), "came thronging" (NJPS), "went in a throng" (Collins 1993:256, 258), "mustered" (Goldingay 1989:119–20). Objections that this imagery is ill-fitting for the decorum of court or for an act of espionage (e.g., Montgomery 1927:272–73) are answered by an appeal to the "strong element of ridicule in the portrayal" (Collins 1993:266; see Goldingay 1989:121, 125). Second, some older works take the Aramaic verb to indicate a tumult (e.g., Saadia, Benedictus Arias Montanus, Grotius, 1917 Jewish version [all listed by Montgomery 1927:272]), and they are followed by Lacocque (they "rushed"; 1979:111, 114–115) and others who combine the two (e.g., the verb "suggests a group acting by agreement but with the bustle that a crowd inevitably makes" [Goldingay 1989:121]). The third proposal best fits the dynamics of envy and its accompanying conspiracy that characterize this tale. James Montgomery finishes his review of the problem with the conclusion that the Aramaic verb "may be taken as mng. 'they acted in concert, harmony,' here practically, 'in conspiracy' " (1927:273). Other commentators and translations have also captured this connotation: they "went in collusion" (6:7 [6:6 Eng.], Hartman and Di Lella 1978:192), they "came by agreement" (6:7 [6:6 Eng.] NASB), they "conspired and came" (6:7 [6:6 Eng.] NRSV), "the conspirators came" (6:12, 16 [6:11, 15 Eng.] NRSV). Envy is the driving force in this tale, and an English translation of הרגשו (6:7, 12, 16 [6:6, 11, 15 Eng.]) that reflects its crucial significance is to be preferred.

The charges against Daniel are expressed by phrases that echoes the similar accusation made against Daniel's three companions in Daniel 3. The parallel raises questions concerning the relationship between the two tales. Lawrence Wills notes the fact that the Old Greek (OG) versions of Daniel 4, 5, and 6 are divergent from the Masoretic Text (MT) more extensively than are those of Daniel 1, 2, and 3 (1990:144–45; cf. Collins 1993:37). Collins explains, however, that the differences between the OG and MT are of a different character in each of those three chapters: "the relationship between the MT and the OG is not consistent throughout chaps 4–6" (1993:7). Dean Wenthe provides the best explanation of this puzzling situation by demonstrating that both the OG and the MT reflect later

editions that developed independently from a common core (1991). The evidence suggests that both the OG and the MT are the results of "multiple editions with a common origin, but a subsequent complex history" (Wenthe 1991:244). At the end of that history for the MT of Daniel 6 is an editor whom Wills posits to be the same one who brought Daniel 4–6 together with Daniel 1–3 (1990:143–44). "These two conflicts [Dan 3 and Dan 6] were edited at the same time by the same redactor" (Wills 1990:143). "Daniel 6 probably resulted from a long editing process, while Daniel 3 is a barely retouched oral legend. The similarities between them, therefore, must have resulted from the editing of Daniel 6 with Daniel 3 as a model" (Wills 1990:144). Wills points to structural similarities between the two tales, and we find in the accusations made against the Judeans a very clear verbal correspondence as well (see Figure 9). Further supporting Wills's idea that, in the MT, Daniel 6 was shaped to match Daniel 3, Wenthe's study concludes that this phrase in Daniel 6:14 [6:13 Eng.] is an expansion in the MT, absent from the OG and thus also from the common core (Wenthe 1991:215).

Daniel 3:12	"These men have paid no attention to you, O King" גברי֣א אל֗ך לא֤ שמ֙ו֙ עלי֣ך מלכ֔א ט֖עם
Daniel 6:14 [6:13 Eng.]	דניא֗ל . . . לא֤ שׂ֙ם֙ עלי֣ך מלכ֔א ט֖עם Daniel . . . has paid no attention to you, O King"

Figure 9. Parallel accusations against the Judeans in Daniel 3 and Daniel 6

This idiom of "paying no attention" (לא שם טעם) functions in both Daniel 3 and 6 to underscore the heroes' decision to risk dishonor and death in order to remain loyal to the Judean God. From the point of view of the foreign subjugators, these men are expected to demonstrate loyalty to the king, to honor the king as their provider, their patron. It is thus an appropriate—and very serious—charge to suggest not simply that these men do not obey the law (as the Greek translations emphasize) but rather that they disregard the lawmaker, the king. From the point of view of the second-century Judean readers, on the other hand, the charge of "paying no attention" similarly demonstrates that more is at stake than simply political alignments and legal maneuvers; there is a fundamental conflict of tradition. Here again the broad connotations of a term like "tradition" serve

well to encompass the breadth of political *and* religious dynamics at work in this situation. As an industrial-era Western audience, modern readers and commentators think of politics and religion as distinct domains, but the ancient world knew religion only as embedded in politics—"political religion" (see above, 3.1). Thus the conflict of traditions in the book of Daniel is narrated with a mix of what *we* would distinguish as some political and some religious language, imagery, etc. Daniel and his Judean companions "pay no attention" to the king—a political figure—and turn instead to their God—a religious figure. Without the imposition of our distinction between these social domains, however, we find Daniel and his companions resisting a foreign tradition (complete with its political religion) in favor of fidelity to their native Judean tradition (complete with its political religion).

Regardless of the outcome of scholarly debates about the historicity of the kings named in these tales (see, e.g., Koch 1980:191–93; Shea 1982; Grabbe 1988; Yamauchi 1990:57–59), second-century Judean readers could perceive these monarchs (whether Babylonian, Median, Persian, Medo-Persian, etc.) as types of the Greeks, their present foreign subjugators (see Towner 1984:70–71). The social dynamics at work in the situations narrated by Daniel 3 and 6 are also those operative in the difficult years narrated by the Maccabean literature. In the case of Daniel and his companions, their disrespect for the king is disloyalty and will lead to dishonor for one party or the other. The foreign conspirators create these situations to ensure that the dishonor falls on the Judeans. The tales of the book of Daniel serve to reverse that verdict.

The charge of "paying no attention" explicitly invokes the cultural value of honor. The outcome of the comparison between the two competing traditions is indicated by the *acknowledgment* ("paying attention") that one's claim receives and the other's does not. The foreign conspirators intend their orchestration of an either/or conflict of loyalty to result in dishonor and destruction for the Judeans; instead, it becomes an opportunity for an exercise in the virtue of righteousness (i.e., loyalty) by the Judeans and vindication by God, who wins great honor at the expense of the foreign conspirators. The Judeans pay no attention to the king, that is, they do not render him the proper honor. This is perceived as a crime and a challenge by those loyal to the king and his tradition, but it is understood to be an exercise in righteousness by Judean readers. Indeed, even the

foreign king and the envious conspirators eventually understand the excellence of the Judeans' loyalty, for the Judean God vindicates these clients and wins the praise of all who witness this God's amazing deliverance. In stark contrast to the disregard shown to the foreign king, *everyone* "pays attention" to (i.e., acknowledges) the Judean God. That is, all praise, glory, and honor are given to him, not only by all those present, including the foreign king, but the same is required of all the world—by decree (שם טעם) of the foreign king!

Interestingly, the Aramaic idiom that indicates the Judeans' lack of acknowledgment in 3:12 and 6:14 [6:13 Eng.], שם טעם ("to pay attention"), is precisely the same idiom that indicates the action by which the foreign kings acknowledge the Judean God, שם טעם ("to make a decree," also in Dan 3:10 and 4:3 [4:6 Eng.]; see Collins 1993:186). In Daniel 3:29 the decree is addressed to "every people, nation, and tongue" (כל עם אמה ולשן), while the decree in Daniel 6:26–27 [6:25–26 Eng.] calls upon "all peoples, nations, and tongues" (כל עממיא אמיא ולשניא). This vision of universal loyalty and honor to God is a theme common throughout the Bible, shared not only by the Hebrew prophets (Isa 45:23) but also the earliest Christians (Phil 2:10–11) and New Testament writers (Rom 14:11).

3.2.2 *Labelling and Deviance*

The conspirators' accusation is further clarified by insights from labelling and deviance theory. Perhaps anticipating the king's favorable disposition towards Daniel (consistent with the king's consideration of Daniel for a higher administrative post), the conspirators label him not only a disloyal nonconformist but also an "exile from Judah" (6:14 [6:13 Eng.]), that is, not a true and worthy citizen of the kingdom at all. A deviance process has been initiated by the group of co-regents who act as rule creators by compelling the king to establish a new law (the OG depicts the co-regents themselves as enacting the law [see Ziegler 1954:158]). If deviance is defined as being "out of place" (see above, 2.2), then attention is focused on the shared social perception of proper boundaries. One way boundaries are made explicit is by institutionalizing them through royal decree. The decree proposed in Daniel 6:8 [6:7 Eng.] redraws a boundary; it redefines justice (the duties expected of loyal clients) by naming persons (exclusively the king) and times (the next thirty days). The making of a petition to anyone other than the king is to be considered an offense of such gravity that it carries the death penalty (6:8

[6:7 Eng.]). The new rule is enhanced by the king's sponsorship, which lends to it the irrevocable power of the "law of the Medes and Persians" (6:9–10 [6:8–9 Eng.]; for comment on the historical resonances of this phrase, see Collins 1993:267–68).

With the boundary redrawn and the rule firmly in place, the conspirators then proceed with the denunciation. As high officials in the kingdom, the conspirators are well qualified to serve as denouncers, for they represent the Mesopotamian tradition's core values and are concerned to protect them against all threats. Further, they invoke the new law and its irrevocable force, both of which are affirmed by the king, when they make the denunciation (6:13 [6:12 Eng.]). The king has no choice but to condemn the accused, lest he invite dishonor by showing disregard for his own laws and tradition (commentators often cite the similar circumstances involving Herod in Mark 6:7–29 and Matt 14:3–12 [e.g., Goldingay 1989:132; Collins 1993:270]). These extreme circumstances, orchestrated by the conspirators, help explain why the king followed through on the deviance process despite his evident concern for Daniel (6:15–17 [6:14–16 Eng.]).

The denouncers not only accuse Daniel of disregarding the king by making petition to the Judean God (that is, engaging in rule-breaking action) but they further label him through retrospective interpretation. "This Daniel," they begin, "who is one of the exiles of Judah, . . ." (דניאל די מן בני גלותא די יהוד, 6:14 [6:13 Eng.]). They recall Daniel's past and his condition as an exile from Judah, thereby suggesting that Daniel is still tainted by his "outsider" status. This label of foreign outsider, "exile," both explains Daniel's present rule-breaking action and intensifies the perception of him and his action as dangerous and threatening to the tradition of the king and the conspirators. The statement made by the denouncers to the king (6:14 [6:13 Eng.]) serves to affirm (1) Daniel's responsibility for his flagrant disregard of the decree ("he keeps making his petition three times a day"), (2) the injury to the king and the king's tradition ("he pays no attention to you . . . or to the decree"), and (3) the victim (". . . to *you*, O King, and the decree which *you* signed"). The denouncers also succeed in (4) securing Daniel's condemnation (6:17 [6:16 Eng.]), after they compel the king by appealing to a higher norm: "Your Majesty, remember that no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed, not even by the king" (6:16 [6:15 Eng.] CEV). This condemnation has been won by a deviance process that began with denunciation and proceeded to retrospective interpretation, by

which Daniel's denouncers argue that he presents a continually dangerous threat as a disloyal foreign exile.

The casting of Daniel into the lions' den is the attempt to complete the deviance process by a status degradation ritual which would result in a complete change in status for Daniel: from powerful ruler to convicted criminal, from honorable courtier to deviant exile, indeed from living to dead (cf. Malina and Neyrey 1991a:115–16). Judean readers are met with yet another form of the sustained comparison that characterizes Daniel 1–6. In the tale of Daniel 6, the employment of a deviance process has invoked the core values of two traditions—those of the dominant group are pitted against those of the deviant in a test of behavior. The relative values of the two traditions rise or fall, in inverse proportion, with the success or failure of their proponents, thus allowing for comparison and evaluation. Here again the Judean tradition is pitted against that of foreign subjugators. And again the terms of the contest are the most extreme possible; nothing less than death and total dishonor are on the line, not only for Daniel but also for his tradition and his God. In these extreme circumstances the Judean God acts decisively, vindicating this client and his traditional loyalty and reversing the condemnatory process, turning it back upon those who represent the competing tradition. The deviance process is not successfully completed; it is interrupted and reversed. Thus, just as Daniel 3 features a highly-orchestrated opportunity for universal acknowledgment that is designed for the king but is instead subverted to benefit the Judean God, so too does Daniel 6 feature a highly-orchestrated attempt to discredit Daniel and his God that results instead in vindication for the Judean and death and dishonor for his rivals.

In the tale of Daniel 6, the deviance process is interrupted not by any of the means identified by the anthropological model but by God's intervention and deliverance of Daniel from the lions (6:23 [6:22 Eng.]). The preservation, transmission, and recitation of the tale, however, serve to provide an alternative retrospective interpretation. The statement of Daniel (6:23 [6:22 Eng.]) serves to deny (1) the effect of the deviance process and thus the claim of his detractors against him ("my God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions, and they did not hurt me"), (2) the injury ("I was found innocent . . . I have done no wrong") and (3) the victim ("toward *you*, O King, I have done no wrong"). The denial of the victim extends implicitly to the conspirators, who are now seen to be in the wrong

in their promulgation of this law that has been justifiably broken by Daniel. This reversal of the perception of who in fact is deviant results in the condemnation of the condemners. All those who conspired against Daniel, including their wives and children (thereby terminating their kinship lines and precluding the possibility of continuing *their* tradition), are summarily executed by the very means intended for Daniel's execution (6:25 [6:24 Eng.]).

Finally, the appeal to higher loyalties also addresses the question of responsibility. That is, Daniel does not deny his responsibility for his actions; rather, his intentional rule-breaking is presented as a positive model. It can be presented positively for two reasons, which are really the two sides of a single coin. First, according to the calculus of the deviance process, readers understand that Daniel's honor is not tarnished by the accusations, because his condemners have subsequently been condemned and ultimately dishonored by death. Second, his actions are justified by appeal to a higher loyalty. The king himself foreshadows Daniel's vindication when he repeatedly describes Daniel's loyalty to the Judean God: "Your God *whom you serve* [פלח] *constantly* [בתדירא, i.e., enduringly, traditionally, across generations] will deliver you himself" (6:17 [6:16 Eng.]), "Daniel, *servant* [עבד] of the living God . . . *whom you serve* [פלח] *constantly* [בתדירא]" (6:21 [6:20 Eng.]). The narrator, too, emphasizes as decisive in reversing the circumstances Daniel's "trust" (הימן) in God, that is, his loyalty to God (6:24 [6:23 Eng.]). The second-century Judean audience thus finds in this tale both a comparison which ultimately favors the Judean tradition, despite the power and persuasiveness of the foreign tradition, and a model of loyal, even if necessarily rule-breaking, adherence to the God of the Judean tradition.

4 *Summary*

The court conflict tales of Daniel 3 and 6 share much in common. They each function as another episode in the on-going comparison of the Judean tradition with that of a foreign subjugator. In Daniel 1–6 that foreign power is variously represented as Babylonian, Median, or Persian. For the second-century Judean readers of these tales, however, the foreign power at hand is Greek. Not only are the machinations of envy turned upside-down in these tales, but the honor dynamics of envy in Hellenistic Judea are likewise encouraged

to reverse. The allure of all things Greek prompted a backlash of renewed dedication to the Judean tradition, and these tales serve that cause well by suggesting that the foreign powers ought properly to envy the Judean tradition, rather than vice-versa. In each of these tales, the Judean heroes' success breeds envy among the foreign courtiers. The Judeans are placed in an either/or situation in which they must choose which tradition they will honor with their loyalty. In both cases, the Judeans' choice to honor their God serves as a model for the Judean readers. The choice also serves as an opportunity for God to vindicate the clients' loyalty by delivering them from the foreign conspirators' attempts at envious homicide. Thus the same choice of loyalty to the Judean heritage and its God over those of the foreign subjugator is recommended to the audience not only by the influence of the heroes' example but also by the patent superiority of the God who "delivers and rescues" (Dan 6:28 [6:27 Eng.]). The preservation and recitation of these tales serve to reverse the deviance process that is initiated against the Judean heroes. Now it is the foreign subjugators who stand accused and who are finally condemned.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUCCESS AND FAILURE: DANIEL 4 AND 5

Daniel 4 and Daniel 5 are arguably the most significant tales in the compilation. The structure of the book of Daniel focuses attention upon these two tales by making them the center of a chiastic structure (see Lenglet 1972; Albertz 1988:170–83). Daniel 4 and 5 are related to each other by the shared theme of God's activity with regard to an arrogant king. Daniel 3 and 6 each feature an envious conspiracy and attempted homicide (see above, Chapter Four). Daniel 2 and 7 contain corresponding visions of a sequence of kingdoms. Note, too, that these chapters (Dan 2–7) are the ones which are preserved in Aramaic; Daniel 1 and Daniel 8–12 are in the Hebrew language. The addition of Daniel 1 as an introduction to the entire book balances the addition of Daniel 8–12 as an apocalyptic development of the tales' themes (see Collins 1993:24). The structure of the book thereby emphasizes its central material, Daniel 4 and Daniel 5 (see Figure 10). These central chapters develop the tales' theme of God's ultimate sovereignty. Daniel 4 is the positive example of an earthly king who suffers a great indignity and thereby comes to "know" that God has sovereignty over human kingship, whereupon the king has his earthly dominion restored to him. Daniel 5 is the negative example of an earthly king who has not learned the lesson, does not acknowledge God's sovereignty, and thereby suffers the ultimate loss of not only his kingship but also his life.

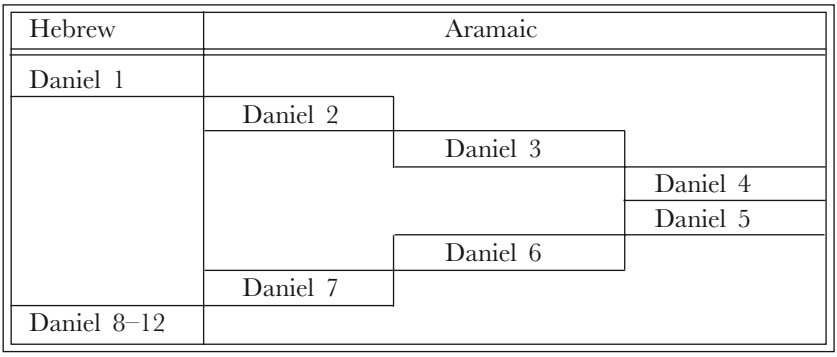

Figure 10. Chiastic structure in the book of Daniel

1 *The Text*

1.1 *Daniel 4*

Daniel 4, like the tales that precede it, features Nebuchadnezzar as the king. The tale is unusual in the placement of a doxology at its opening, however (this doxology is absent in the OG [see Collins 1993:208–21]). Indeed, the medieval verse numbering, reflected in the Masoretic Text, places the doxology at the end of Daniel 3 (3:31–33 [4:1–3 Eng.]). This numbering was rejected by Protestant Reformers, whose numbering is followed in modern English translations. The placement of the doxology at the beginning of the tale may serve to form an *inclusio* with the similar doxology which ends Daniel 6 (note the repetition of "signs and wonders," אתין ותמהין, in 3:32, 33 [4:2, 3 Eng.] and 6:28 [6:27 Eng.]), a device that would be expected if Daniel 4–6 had once circulated independently, as some suggest (Collins 1993:220–21). As the book stands in its Masoretic edition, the doxological beginning of this fourth tale contrasts sharply with the tragic ending of the fifth (5:30–6:1 [5:30–31 Eng.]). Further, this movement from a king's praise of the Judean God to a king's disdain for and judgment by this God reverses the pattern typical of the other tales, in which the king moves from competition with God to praise for God. Our social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6 provides a way to understand this reversal as an indication of the risk involved in "impiety," that is, in lack of loyalty and refusal to acknowledge that God alone (and no human leader) provides (cf. Deut 8:11–20).

After the opening doxology, Daniel 4 features another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (4:1–15 [4:4–18 Eng.]). As in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar calls the Babylonian diviners (4:3 [4:6 Eng.]), but they are unable to interpret the dream (4:4 [4:7 Eng.]). Finally, Daniel comes to hear the dream (4:5 [4:8 Eng.]). According to the Masoretic Text, the king asks Daniel to tell him the dream (חזוי חלמי, 4:6 [4:9 Eng.]), as in Daniel 2. Most commentators suggest an emendation here, however, and read חזי חלמי, "behold my dream," thus indicating that Nebuchadnezzar relates the dream before demanding the interpretation, unlike the scene in Daniel 2 (see Montgomery 1927:228, followed by Collins 1993:223). The dream was a vision of a great tree (4:7–9 [4:10–12 Eng.]), which a heavenly "watcher" (see Collins 1993:224–26 for a discussion of this term) orders to be hewn down, leaving the

stump (4:10–12 [4:13–15 Eng.]). The description then slips into using a personal referent rather than continuing with the imagery of the tree (see Collins 1993:227). "He" is said to have his heart changed into that of a beast for a period of seven "times" (probably years; Montgomery 1927:234), so that the world may know that God has power over kings and kingdoms (4:13–14 [4:16–17 Eng.]).

The text of Daniel 4:16–24 [4:19–27 Eng.] narrates the interpretation of the dream. Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar that the great tree is the king himself (4:17–19 [4:20–22 Eng.]), and that the order to chop it down is a heavenly decree against Nebuchadnezzar (4:20–22 [4:23–25 Eng.]). The king will be driven out like an animal—though his kingdom will be preserved—until he recognizes God's sovereignty (4:22–23 [4:25–26 Eng.]). The end of the tale relates the fulfillment of this dream: "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king" (4:25 [4:28 Eng.]). The king proudly claims credit for the glory of his kingdom (4:26–27 [4:29–30 Eng.]) and is promptly driven out to live like an animal (4:28–30 [4:31–33 Eng.]) until he properly honors God, after which his kingdom is restored to him (4:31–34 [4:34–37 Eng.]).

1.2 *Daniel 5*

Daniel 5 features Belshazzar as the king. This character is not formally introduced, but his pedigree is frequently mentioned in passing as the text describes him as the son of Nebuchadnezzar (5:22) and Nebuchadnezzar as his father (5:2, 11, 13, 18). The Belshazzar depicted in Daniel 5, then, is the king of Babylon and the son of Nebuchadnezzar; further, his kingdom is succeeded by that of Media and Persia under Darius the Mede (5:28, 6:1 [5:31 Eng.]). These details of this tale are particularly problematic for historical reconstruction. The historical Belshazzar was neither the son of Nebuchadnezzar nor his successor, if indeed the title "king" can be attributed to Belshazzar at all, and Darius is called "the Mede" only in Daniel (see Collins 1993:29–33, 245). The efforts either of conservatives to make the historical data fit this literary scenario (e.g., Waltke 1976; Archer 1979; for critique of this approach, see Grabbe 1987) or of historical critics to find the "real" referents of these literary details (e.g., Montgomery 1927:63–72; Davies 1985:26–31) are unnecessary for a reading which understands the foreign king to serve as a type of the foreign subjugator dominating the current audience. A second-century Judean audience's primary referent would be the reign of

Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Although scholars have sometimes denied that the tale in Daniel 5 reflects specific events under Antiochus (Montgomery 1927:249; Hartman and Di Lella 1978: 186), the social-scientific reading given below demonstrates that the lessons learned by Belshazzar and his audience are entirely pertinent to the second-century leadership and reading audience of these tales.

Daniel 5:1–4 sets the scene for this tale at a great feast given by Belshazzar. As is the erection of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Daniel 3, the feast is an occasion to gather an elite audience to enjoy the king's beneficence and laud him with expressions of honor and loyalty. Along with his thousand nobles and various other court personnel, Belshazzar drinks wine from the vessels taken from the Judean temple in Jerusalem (5:1–3). As they drink, a frightening and perplexing thing happens (5:5–9). A hand appears and writes on the wall an inscription (5:5) that the king's divinatory specialists cannot read and interpret (5:8; Goldingay reviews some of the speculation about the reason for their inability [1989:109]), despite the king's promises of reward (5:7). The queen then enters and reminds the king of Daniel, who proved superior to the Babylonian diviners during Nebuchadnezzar's reign (5:10–12). Daniel is brought before the king, who explains the situation and promises reward to Daniel if he is able to read and interpret the inscription (5:13–16).

Daniel's reply to the king (5:17–28) includes a reminder to Belshazzar of Nebuchadnezzar's relationship to "the Most High God" (5:18–21), a reproach to Belshazzar for not following his father's example (5:22–23), and a reading and interpretation of the inscription (5:24–28). Daniel's reference to Nebuchadnezzar's example draws from the events narrated in Daniel 4, thus further cementing these two tales together. The tale concludes with the granting of the promised rewards to Daniel (5:29), the death of Belshazzar (5:30), and the accession of Darius the Mede (6:1 [5:31 Eng.]).

2 *The Model*

2.1 *Review of the Dynamics of Honor*

A social-scientific reading of Daniel 4 and 5 requires a review of selected elements of our model of honor. The way in which the tales function to demonstrate the theme of God's ultimate sovereignty depends upon a socially-shared understanding of the rightful place

of God at "the top of the ladder" (Malina's phrase, 2001a:30; see Chapter Two, 3.1). In a closed, static universe, God wields an authority that requires the obedience of all those who are subject to that authority (see Reese 1998; Pilch 1998c:158). To the extent that one behaves according to the expectations of one's status (i.e., acknowledging and being subject to God's authority), one fulfills the obligations of honor. Disregard, however, is taken as an honor challenge, as the tales of Daniel 3 and 6 demonstrate by the Judeans' disobedience of the king's decrees (see Chapter Four, 3.2.1). Daniel 4 and 5 feature the same dynamics but transpose them to a higher key; featured here is the king who is found to be in contempt, challenging the honor of God. In the same way that God vindicated the Judeans in their disobedience of the king in those tales (Dan 3 and 6), these tales provide an opportunity for the king to gain honor at God's expense. That does not occur, however; God alone has dominion, as Nebuchadnezzar comes to recognize and rightly declares (4:31–32 [4:34–35 Eng.]).

On the way to teaching Nebuchadnezzar a lesson (by the severe methods employed in authoritarian parenting [see Pilch 1998b]), however, Daniel 4 provides other opportunities to observe the dynamics of honor. For example, as in other tales, the failure of the Babylonian specialists to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream provides an opportunity for Daniel to win honor by successfully performing a difficult feat (see above, Chapter Three, 3.2.4). Further, the dream itself trades in the currency of honor, addressing itself to concerns of status, role, and acknowledgment.

2.2 *Three-Zone Model of Human Personality*

Our reading of Daniel 5 requires attention not only to the dynamics of honor but also to the typically Semitic conception of human personality by a three-zone model. This model, first developed by Bernard de Géradon (1958), has been further explicated and applied to a diversity of biblical material by Malina and others (Malina 2001a:68–75; Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:419–20; Pilch 1991b; see also Malina 1998a; Malina 1998c; McVann 1998). "Human beings consist of three mutually interpenetrating yet distinguishable zones of interacting . . .: the zone of emotion-fused thought, the zone of self-expressive speech, and the zone of purposeful action" (Malina 2001a:68). Distinct parts of the human body and the various activities related to these parts are associated with each of the three zones

(see Figure 11). Indeed, a shorthand way to refer to each of the three zones utilizes the main body parts associated with that zone; thus, the zone of emotion-fused thought is designated by "eyes-heart" (cf. Malina 1998a), the zone of self-expressive speech is designated by "mouth-ears" (cf. McVann 1998), and the zone of purposeful action is designated by "hands-feet" (cf. Malina 1998c).

Zone	Body parts	Affiliated vocabulary
emotion-fused thought	eyes-heart	• to see, know, understand, think • thought, mind, wisdom, folly, intention, plan
self-expressive speech	mouth-ears	• to speak, hear, instruct, praise, blame • speech, voice, call, cry, talkative, silent
purposeful action	hands-feet	• to do, act, execute, touch, sit • action, gesture, work, activity

Figure 11. Three-zone model of human personality (Malina 2001a)

Biblical references that employ the vocabulary associated with one or more of these zones thereby evoke that zone, just as the use of terms from all three sets of vocabulary evokes the total person. For example, "note how the prophet Elisha symbols his total living self as he lies on the child he seeks to resuscitate: 'his *mouth* upon his mouth, his *eyes* upon his eyes, and his *hands* upon his hands' (2 Kings 4:34)" (Malina 2001a:70). Likewise, the Shema involves the total person in its call to divine loyalty and obedience.

> *Hear*, O Israel: YHWH is our God, YHWH alone. You shall *love* YHWH your God with all your *heart*, and with all your *soul*, and with all your *might*. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your *heart*. *Recite* them to your children and *talk* about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. *Bind* them as a sign on your *hand*, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and *write* them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut 6:4–9 NRSV, except "YHWH" for "the LORD" and emphasis added)

The three main verbs call for the involvement of each of the three zones: "love"—eyes-heart, "recite"/"talk" (as well as the opening call to "hear")—mouth-ears, and "bind"/"write"—hands-feet. Further, the call to "love YHWH" is specified with reference to, arguably, all three zones: "heart"—eyes-heart, "soul" (נפש, i.e., breath)—mouth-ears, and "might" (having to do with action)—hands-feet. The effect is in-

escapable: the Shema calls Israelites to involve the whole person in their loyalty to God, a loyalty that is to be exhaustive and all-encompassing (cf. Miller 1990:102–04). In Daniel 5, Belshazzar's feast, its divine interruption, and the ensuing events (Belshazzar's fear, Daniel's interpretation, etc.) make very effective use of these three zones to indicate the comprehensiveness of God's sovereignty.

3 *The Reading*

3.1 *Daniel 4*

The doxology that opens the fourth tale (Dan 3:31–33 [4:1–3 Eng.]) is important not only structurally (as described above, 1.1) but also thematically. It sounds the repeated theme of God's everlasting sovereignty: "His kingship is everlasting kingship, and his sovereignty from generation to generation" (3:33 [4:3 Eng.]). The endurance of God's kingdom is put in question by the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, as related in Daniel 1:1–2. Our reading of Daniel 1 (see above, Chapter Two), however, found that the power behind this event is placed squarely in God's hands; it is God who gave the Judean kingdom over to Nebuchadnezzar. This implicit introduction of the theme finds explicit vocalization in Daniel's prayer in Daniel 2. God is praised as the one who "removes kings and establishes kings" (2:21). In the dream of Daniel 2 and its interpretation, the stone which grows to fill the earth (2:35) is taken to represent the kingdom of God, which will both bring to an end all other kingdoms and endure eternally (2:44). At the conclusion of the tales, this theme is sounded again in the doxology of 6:27–28 [6:26–27 Eng.]. The language there echoes that found in the opening doxology of Daniel 4, describing "[God's] kingship" (מלכותה) and "[God's] sovereignty" (שלטנה) with various terms of endurance (3:33 [4:3 Eng.]).

The most frequent reiteration of this theme is found in the tales of Daniel 4 and 5. These tales emphasize its two different aspects, which may be seen as the two sides of a single coin or as interdependent corollaries one to the other. Thus the eternal endurance of God's dominion and God's ability to promote and depose kings over earthly kingdoms are mutually interdependent. It is the endurance of God's dominion that allows God to promote and depose kings, while that ability demonstrates God's eternal sovereignty. In Daniel 4 and 5, God's power to establish and remove kings is repeatedly formulated

as a subordinate corollary to God's ultimate sovereignty. God is the real power behind the earthly kingdoms, and the dominion of kings is a gift ascribed to them by God (cf. Dan 2:37). The language of Daniel 5:19 describes well (especially in the vivid terms of the NRSV) the earthly king's prerogatives in the use of power: "He killed those he wanted to kill, kept alive those he wanted to keep alive, honored those he wanted to honor, and degraded those he wanted to degrade." Just one verse prior, however, the text makes clear that this power is given to the king by God, who grants (יהב) to him "kingship, and greatness, and honor [יקרא], and majesty" (5:18). Just as Nebuchadnezzar is thereby enabled to exercise power over life and death, honor and dishonor, in his kingdom, so too God is able to exercise the same power over Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The reality of that divine prerogative is the subject of these two tales, which bear witness to God's power to dishonor Nebuchadnezzar in one and kill Belshazzar in the other. Their sovereignty is not absolute but rather derivative from the absolute sovereignty of God.

Thus the affirmation is repeatedly voiced and its truth variously illustrated that God's dominion is everlasting while earthly kings enjoy sovereignty only when it is given to them by God, who retains the right and the ability to remove it from them. This message is a welcome reminder for a second-century Judean audience who feels ravaged by the capricious exercise of power by their Seleucid overlord. Philip Esler's application of a social-scientific approach finds this message articulated in the apocalyptic vision of Daniel 7 as well.

> The social function of this mythopoesis . . . is to reassure the readers of the vision that another order of reality exists and that the terrible events of their present and recent past are occurring within a context controlled by heavenly forces who will ultimately restore the fortunes of the holy [i.e., the loyal, faithful] ones. (Esler 1994:109)

In the putative setting of the Babylonian exile, this reassurance calms the fears of those who are tempted to conclude, from the fact that their king has been overthrown by another king, that their God has likewise been overthrown by the deities of the conquering kingdom. In a second-century Judean setting, this reassurance calms the fears of those who are likewise tempted to conclude that the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the actions of the high priests Jason and Menelaus (see 2 Macc 4–5) point to a future in which Hellenistic tradition thoroughly supplants Judean tradition. No, the tales insist, there is

a place for those who remain loyal to the Judean tradition, because the sovereignty of the Judean God endures and indeed controls the reigns of the earthly kings.

The tales of Daniel 4 and 5 are particularly pointed illustrations of this theme's claim. Following the opening doxology, Daniel 4 relates a dream of Nebuchadnezzar as well as its interpretation and fulfillment. The events surrounding the interpretation of the dream are similar to those that accompany Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation in the tale of Daniel 2. The cultural dynamics of honor and challenge are operative in this episode just as they are in Daniel 2 (see above, Chapter Three). Thus, the Babylonian specialists are called in first, but they are unable to interpret the dream (4:3–4 [4:6–7 Eng.]). Then Daniel arrives and succeeds where the Babylonians have failed (4:5, 15 [4:8, 18 Eng.]). Daniel's success is explicitly linked not to his skill in Babylonian divination but to his possession of a "holy divine spirit" (רוח אלהין קדישין) (4:5, 6, 15 [4:8, 9, 18 Eng.]; 5:11, 14; cf. 6:4 [4:3 Eng.]). Daniel and his loyalty to the Judean God, who is the source of Daniel's success, are demonstrably superior to the Babylonian diviners and their tradition. With honor at stake in these court contests—these honor challenges—Daniel comes out as the winner. In a zero-sum game of limited good, one's victory necessarily means another's loss, and as a representative of the Judean tradition, Daniel demonstrates the superiority of Judean tradition in comparison with the foreign tradition.

The dream and its interpretation likewise participate in the cultural dynamics of honor and challenge. The imagery of a great tree that is chopped down is comparable to another story about kingship and honor common in the ancient world. In the version of this story preserved by Herodotus (cf. Livy 1.54.6–10), Periander becomes the ruler of Corinth and sends a messenger to the ruler of Miletus, Thrasybulus.

> He sent a herald to Thrasybulus and enquired how he should most safely so order all matters as best to govern his city. Thrasybulus led the man who had come from Periander outside the town, and entered into a sown field; where, while he walked through the corn and plied the herald with still-repeated questions anent his coming from Corinth, he would ever cut off the tallest that he saw of the stalks, and cast away what he cut off, till by so doing he had destroyed the best and richest of the crop. . . . Periander understood what had been done, and perceived that Thrasybulus had counselled him to slay those of his townsmen who stood highest. (*Hist.* 5.92)

In the agonistic society that results from a perception of limited good, the concern to check the progress of any who appear to be prospering is a commonplace. Because another's success necessarily comes at the expense of one's own good (see the description of envy above, Chapter Four, 2.1), one has an interest in undermining the other's success. Rulers are therefore careful to guard their own status by bringing low those who are on the rise and who are thereby potential rivals. We have seen this dynamic at work already in the relations between Daniel or his companions and their rival courtiers under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3) and Darius (Dan 6).

Daniel 4 and 5 feature this dynamic at work in the relations not between humans within the kingdom but between the king—whether Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4) or Belshazzar (Dan 5)—and God, "the Most High." As we have noted already, the opening doxology of Daniel 4 participates in the theme of God's ultimate sovereignty, which has as its corollary God's ability to establish and remove earthly kings. Nebuchadnezzar's recitation of his dream already includes an explicit statement of this theme; he relates to Daniel the decree of the watchers to hew the tree and includes the description of its purpose: so that "all who live may know that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans and grants it to whomever he wishes" (ינדעון חייא די שליט עליא במלכות אנשא ולמן די יצבא יתננה; 4:14 [4:17 Eng.]). Daniel affirms this purpose with the identical words when he recounts the dream's interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar; the affliction will last, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar, until "you know that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans and grants it to whomever he wishes" (תנדע די שליט עליא במלכות אנשא ולמן די יצבא יתננה; 4:22 [4:25 Eng.]), or again, until you "know that Heaven [i.e., God; see Collins 1993:229–30] has sovereignty" (תנדע די שלטן שמיא; 4:23 [4:26 Eng.]). The identical words appear again as a voice from heaven declares the fulfillment of the dream and decrees that Nebuchadnezzar will be driven out until he "knows that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans and grants it to whomever he wishes" (תנדע די שליט עליא במלכות אנשא ולמן די יצבא יתננה; 4:29 [4:32 Eng.]).

That Nebuchadnezzar *knows* is signified by his *acknowledgment* of God's role as sovereign and God's power over the kings of earth. "It is obviously necessary that power be recognized and accepted [i.e., acknowledged] by those whose existence is being controlled" (Pilch

1998c:158). This acknowledgment takes the form of the thematic doxology in 4:31–32 [4:34–35 Eng.]. Structurally, this thematic statement is sandwiched between the similar doxologies which open Daniel 4 and close Daniel 6. God is recognized as having eternal dominion and power over the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. In contrast to his honor-challenging statement of hubris in 4:27 [4:30 Eng.], Nebuchadnezzar's statement here recognizes his own subordinate role and status in relation to God, whom the king "praises, exalts, and honors" (4:34 [4:37 Eng.]). This acknowledgment is the proper response to the one who has granted the earthly king his kingship. As such, it is the positive model that this tale submits for emulation by the earthly kings of the second century, whether those kings are Seleucid (Antiochus) or Judean (the high priests and Hasmoneans).

That such a recognition of God's role is necessary for preserving the earthly king's role is demonstrated also in the specific lesson learned through the dream and its fulfillment. Most commentators have little to say about Nebuchadnezzar's debased condition during the designated period of the dream's fulfillment. It is sometimes taken to be a sort of mental illness, and Hartman and Di Lella even manage to diagnose "a form of monomania known as zoanthropy" (1978:177) from the scanty textual evidence (others have suggested lycanthropy [e.g., Montgomery 1927:220]). They make this suggestion in order to contrast it to the "burning" or "inflammation" which afflicts Nabonidus according to the *Prayer of Nabonidus* (4QPrNab ar), a text discovered among the Dead Sea scrolls (see Milik 1956; DJD 22.83–93, pl. VI). Even though this text from Qumran involves Nabonidus and not Nebuchadnezzar, it is an appropriate document for comparison because it probably preserves an earlier version of the tradition of a stricken king, one who was only later identified with Nebuchadnezzar (see Collins 1993:216–19; cf. Sack 2003). Lacocque, who diagnoses lycanthropy (1979:86), otherwise psychologizes the episode and allegorizes its significance, suggesting the emergence of "our animal nature" (1979:87). Others minimize the degradation and move quickly to the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar (e.g., Towner 1984:64).

The incident is not an event to be minimized, however, for it is highly significant both socially and culturally. Socially, it affects the crucial institution of monarchy by incapacitating the one who is designated to fulfill the role of king. Culturally, Nebuchadnezzar's affliction is dishonorable, for it prevents him from fulfilling his proper social

role. This link between role-fulfillment and honor, as well as their relationship to illness and healing in the ancient world, is described succinctly by John Pilch.

> Lack of human well-being is a shameful situation, hence restoration to proper human well-being, or healing, is a restoration to honor, a restoration of meaning to life. Proper human well-being, sometimes narrowly described as health, is therefore a means value, a condition that allows a person to fully participate in cultural activities the main purpose of which, in the Mediterranean world, is to maintain or augment honor. (1998a:102)

When Nebuchadnezzar is unable to participate in the expected cultural activities of a king—when he is "driven away from human society and [his] dwelling is with the beasts of the field" (Dan 4:29 [4:32 Eng.])—his specific medical condition or pathological malady is of no concern compared to his loss of role and status and the honor which accompanies them. Furthermore, in contrast to the modern concern about *what* caused this disease (was it a bacteria or a virus? what germs or chemical imbalance have affected the body?), the ancient concern was with *who* did this (what spirit or power is responsible for this misfortune?) (Pilch 1991b:201–02; see also Malina 2001a:100–104). The Judean God of heaven is clearly the responsible party, as the text repeatedly specifies that the action is ordered from "heaven" (4:10, 20, 28, 31, 34 [4:13, 23, 31, 34, 37 Eng.]) by "the Most High" (4:14, 21, 22, 29 [4:17, 24, 25, 32 Eng.]).

Just as someone's power has afflicted the king, so someone's power is needed to heal the king, that is, to remove him from his state of impurity (defined as a mixture of kinds: a human with beasts, eating grass like cattle, his hair like eagles' and his nails like birds'; 4:30 [4:33 Eng.]) and restore him to purity and wholeness. Only the Judean God, who reigns forever and has power over the kings of the earth, is able to "heal" Nebuchadnezzar of this "illness," that is, to restore his kingship and rehabilitate his status. Nebuchadnezzar's declarations appropriately change from the hubris of the claim that "I myself have built . . . by my power . . . for the glory of my honor [ליקר הדרי]" (4:27 [4:30 Eng.]) to the passive-voice recognition of dependence upon a patron, as "my knowledge returned . . . my honor and splendor [הדרי וזיו] returned . . . I was reestablished over my kingdom and exceeding greatness [רבו יתירה] was added to me" (4:33 [4:36 Eng.]). The "knowledge" that returned to Nebuchadnezzar is the knowledge that God has the power to remove and establish kings, just as God has done with Nebuchadnezzar himself.

3.2 *Daniel 5*

Belshazzar, in Daniel 5, is likewise subject to the power of this sovereign God, although his honor-challenging, insubordinate behavior exceeds that of "his father" Nebuchadnezzar and therefore requires a more grave response from God. In the telling of this tale, honor is again prominent not only in its central message but also in many of the details by which that message is communicated. For example, the narrative tells of a "great feast" held by Belshazzar for his "thousand nobles" (5:1). Like the gathering of the elite in Daniel 3, this collection of nobles was not undertaken for the simple purpose of camaraderie. Instead, they provide an audience for Belshazzar's claim to honor. On this occasion, he orders the vessels that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from the Jerusalem temple to be brought for use in the party's drinking (5:2). Being able to provide these vessels demonstrates to the audience that Belshazzar has power over their former owners, the conquered Judeans. The honor symbolized in the precious metals and sacred purpose of the vessels has been taken from the Judeans; by putting the vessels to use for his own purpose (5:3), Belshazzar now claims that honor for himself. Furthermore, the power and glory of the God to whom these vessels were formerly dedicated is now claimed instead for "the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone" (5:4).

Especially helpful for illuminating the various parts of the tale and their relation to the central theme of God's sovereignty is an analysis of the tale's evocation of the three zones of human personality (see above, 2.2). The significance of the proper acknowledgment of God's sovereignty unfolds in this tale as the three main characters—Belshazzar, God, and Daniel—are compared and contrasted. The basis for the comparison is the performance of each character in each of the three zones of human personality. The evocation of a zone is indicated by the text's reference to its attendant body parts and the use of key vocabulary associated with each zone (see above, Figure 11). Affiliated with the zone of emotion-fused thought (*eyes-heart*) is seeing, knowing, understanding, mind, etc. Affiliated with the zone of self-expressive speech (*mouth-ears*) is speaking, hearing, praising, calling, ordering, etc. Affiliated with the zone of purposeful action (*hands-feet*) is doing, acting, working, taking action, etc.

In broad strokes, we may say that Daniel 5 demonstrates the dishonor that befalls one—even a powerful ruler—who does not properly respect the divine sovereignty of the Judean God. In this way,

it is a negative counterpoint to the positive example that Nebuchadnezzar provides by his explicit recognition of God's sovereignty in Daniel 4. The message is woven into the text in ways much more subtle and pervasive than simply the explicit statement of 5:23: "You have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven. . . . You have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone . . . but you have not honored the God in whose power is your life-breath and all your ways." That thematic statement gathers up the cultural cues, couched in imagery of the three zones, that are found throughout the tale. In order to recognize them, let us inquire again how these zones function in relation to the cultural value of honor.

Mark McVann explains that the communicativeness of the mouth-ears is "a means value" (1998:28). "Communicativeness is a key strategy for establishing, maintaining and defending honor. It can also serve as a strategy for attempting to shame others" (McVann 1998:28). One way that the mouth and ears serve the needs of honor is by functioning metaphorically as boundaries of the body (McVann 1998:27). The notion of boundaries evokes a system of purity (see above, Chapter One, 3.1.8), which is also "a means value because it facilitates the realization of the core values of honor and shame" (Pilch 1998d:171). Honor is established and maintained by careful vigilance over the mouth and ears, ensuring that what enters and proceeds from them observes the strictures of purity, that is, proper recognition of the structure and function of the world. Psalm 24:1–6 reveals both the understanding of a purity system and the employment of imagery from the three zones to depict its proper maintenance.

> The earth is YHWH's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of YHWH? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean *hands* and pure *hearts*, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not *swear* deceitfully. They will receive blessing from YHWH, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. (NRSV, except "YHWH" for "the LORD" and emphasis added)

The references in verse 4 make specific mention of all three zones of personality with regard to their purity: "clean hands"—purposeful action; "pure hearts"—emotion-fused thought; and avoidance of "swearing deceitfully," from the mouth—self-expressive speech. From the perspective of a Judean audience, Psalm 24 provides a brief

encapsulation of the structure and function of the world, a recognition and acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over it, and a comprehensive summary of the expectations thereby placed on humanity. When that Judean audience hears or reads of Belshazzar in Daniel 5, they are struck by the contrast with Belshazzar's behavior.

The imagery of the three zones employed in the tale of Daniel 5 communicates the comprehensiveness of Belshazzar's violation of the expectations of a Judean audience. For example, Belshazzar takes action not under God's sovereignty but under the influence of wine (5:2). We have seen previously that the foreign kings in these tales are fond of "making decrees" (שם טעם; Dan 3:10, 3:29, 4:3 [4:6 Eng.], 6:27 [4:26 Eng.]). Our study of Daniel 3 and 6 also revealed that the Judeans resisted the king's decree by "paying no attention" (לא שם טעם; 3:12, 6:14 [13 Eng.]), an attitude which is communicated by an Aramaic idiom identical to the phrase for "making a decree" (see above, Chapter Four, 3.2.1). Here in Daniel 5, Belshazzar makes his call for the profanation of the sacred vessels from the Jerusalem temple when he is "under the influence of the wine" (בטעם חמרא; 5:2). We find here the same term, טעם, used now in its sense as "taste," or as many translators render it, "under the influence" (Collins 1993:244–45; cf. Montgomery 1927:251–52). Readers sense that Belshazzar is taking his orders from the wine; he is operating under "decree" of the wine! Daniel rejects the king's wine in the first tale (Dan 1:8, 16), but Belshazzar now accepts it into his mouth. As a result, out of Belshazzar's mouth comes not the "prudence and discernment" displayed by Daniel (עטא וטעם, Dan 2:14; see above, Chapter Three, 3.2) but rather the order to bring in the temple vessels that had been plundered by Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar is not properly regulating his mouth, and the readers can easily compare this with both the immediately preceding tale involving Nebuchadnezzar's lesson learned about the words of one's mouth (Dan 3:31–33, 4:27–28, 34 [4:1–3, 30–31, 37 Eng.]) as well as the first tale's model of Daniel's prudence (again the same Aramaic term—טעם!) and rejection of the royal wine.

Analysis of these opening verses (Dan 5:1–4) according to the three-zone model of personality notes that the mouth and ears are prominent in both the drinking (admitting something into the body through the mouth) and the praising of the gods (uttering words of praise from the mouth and hearing them through the ears). Likewise, the hands and feet are involved in the ability to order the vessels to be

brought. Thus, the events involve the zones of self-expressive speech (*mouth-ears*) and purposeful action (*hands-feet*), but not the zone of emotion-fused thought (*eyes-heart*). This initial absence of the eyes-heart is the first indication of a problem in Belshazzar's seeing and understanding.

All three zones become involved as the narrative continues. A *hand* appears, taking *action* in response to Belshazzar's action (5:5). When Belshazzar *sees* (5:5), the zone of *eyes-heart* is finally involved, but in a dysfunctional way. This zone of emotion-fused thought is impotent, for Belshazzar cannot *understand* the writing. Belshazzar's *thoughts* alarm and disturb him, causing a disruption in his *action*, as his hips and knees (*hands-feet*) give way beneath him (5:6). Al Wolters interprets the description of Belshazzar's response as a clever euphemism for the loss of "control over the sphincter muscles of his bladder and anus" (1991:119). He proposes that for "an Aramaic-speaking Israelite audience who had suffered much at the hands of the Babylonians . . . this ignominious spectacle is enough to elicit hoots of derisive laughter" (1991:121). Without invoking the cultural value of honor, Wolters has nonetheless recognized the highly dishonorable effect of the king's incontinence and rightly suggests that such dynamics are precisely what strike a responsive chord in an audience under foreign domination. God's *action* has wrested from Belshazzar any control he has over his own *action*.

The king is likewise impotent to *understand* (*eyes-heart*) the hand's action (i.e., the inscription) and so *calls* (*mouth-ears*) for his divinatory specialists (5:7). Belshazzar offers great reward to the one who can read and interpret the inscription; he will be "clothed in purple . . . adorned with a gold chain . . . granted authority" (5:7). For the ancient world, the value of these items lay not in their monetary value but in their ability to adorn the body and thereby display honor and status (Matthews and Benjamin 1993:147; Neyrey provides specific references to purple clothing and gold [1998a]; cf. Montgomery 1927:253–54). The Babylonian specialists prove to be, like their king, impotent and unable to *act*, either by the *eyes-heart*—"they could not read the inscription" (5:8)—or by the *mouth-ears*—"nor make known its interpretation" (5:8). The narrative then reiterates Belshazzar's concern, intensified now by a description of the nobles, whom translations and commentators are uniform in depicting as "perplexed" (משתבשין, from the root שבש; 5:9). As a *hapax legomenon*, the Aramaic term relies on comparative study and careful attention to context to

be deciphered from within a semantic field that includes "confusion," "turning about," and "entanglement" (see BDB 1114; cf. *HALOT* 1991). The Old Greek version describes the king's companions as "talking loudly" (from the root καυχάομαι, 5:6 OG), using a root that carries connotations of "boasting." This scene appears to be a turning point in the tale, as the nobles who were intended to play the part of adoring audience have now become confused, not knowing the significance of this apparition and its inscription. Is their zone of self-expressive speech (*mouth-ears*) to engage in praise, awed by this phenomenon? Or, taking their cue from the evident concern of the king (e.g., his loss of control described in 5:6), are they now beginning to turn their praise into blame as they observe this great humiliation?

Using the categories of the three-zone model of personality, we have seen that Belshazzar is especially active in the zone of self-expressive speech (*mouth-ears*) and that he employed purposeful action (*hands-feet*) in order to bolster his own reputation before his gathered nobles. Yet the absence and impotence of emotion-fused thought (*eyes-heart*) indicates that Belshazzar is lacking in the wisdom that operates from this zone. The text goes on to indicate that only when the eyes-heart are rightly aligned do the mouth-ears properly regulate themselves and the hands-feet undertake appropriate action (5:18–21, see below). In accord with the central theme of Daniel 5, "right alignment," "proper regulation," and "appropriate action" are defined as acknowledgment of the Judean God's sovereignty. Belshazzar is acting (*hands-feet*) without the guidance of a right understanding (*eyes-heart*) of God's sovereignty over the world. His actions (5:1–4), however, are interrupted by God's action in the form of a hand (*hands-feet*) writing on the wall (5:5). Belshazzar is left with only his faculties of the mouth and ears—he does not understand what he sees, and he is powerless to act in defense of his own honor or position. As Belshazzar's faculties fail him, God takes center stage by making Belshazzar see and understand what is the proper speech and action required of a king.

This evocation of the three zones that comprise the whole person continues as the significance of the apparition is made known to the king. Belshazzar has been reduced to a reliance upon his mouth and ears, and he now hears speech from the queen (or queen mother [see Collins 1993:248]), instructing him how to act (5:10) and what to do (5:11–12). Her words to him repeat a set of key vocabulary that is developed across the tales (Dan 1–6) to indicate one of the

aspects of God's sovereignty. She tells him not to let his thoughts disturb him or his "countenance be changed" (זיוך אל ישתנו, 5:10; "face grow pale," NRSV). The noun in this phrase, זיו, is the same term used in Daniel 2:31 when describing the "brilliance" or "brightness" of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (see above, Chapter Three, 3.3). The same term is also used to indicate the "splendor" that returns to Nebuchadnezzar in 4:33 [4:36 Eng.]; when his mouth properly praises the "Most High" (4:31 [4:34 Eng.]), then his "face" is renewed to its royal "splendor." Belshazzar's "splendor," by contrast, has vanished from his face—his "face" has been "changed." The verb in this phrase, שנא, is the same term used also in Daniel 2 to narrate the theme of God's exclusive ability to "change" things (see above, Chapter Three, 3.3). The Babylonian diviners hoped for a "change" in the times (Dan 2:9), but only God has the power to "change" the times (2:21; God's ability to change things extends to kings and kingdoms as well). In Daniel 5, we find Belshazzar's face being changed as a result of God's activity (5:6, 9, 10).

In Belshazzar's debilitated state, he needs others to tell him how to understand the events of this evening. His diviners have proven impotent (5:8), but now the queen is giving Belshazzar instruction (5:10–12). The speech he hears from her not only instructs him to consult Daniel for an understanding of the inscription but also makes explicit for the audience the comparison between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar. The queen does not know simply that Daniel has the ability to "interpret dreams, explain enigmas, and solve difficulties" (5:12, Hartman and Di Lella 1978:182, 184; see also Wolters 1991), but she also knows that Nebuchadnezzar had recognized and acknowledged this power—attributed to a "holy divine spirit" (5:11, see 4:6 [4:9 Eng.]) or an "extraordinary spirit" (5:12)—by honoring Daniel with status and position superior to the diviners. The mention of Nebuchadnezzar not only reminds readers of the previous tales but also introduces a subtle rebuke to Belshazzar for failing to measure up to his predecessor in his relationship to Daniel.

Belshazzar, continuing to operate only from the zone of mouth-ears, *speaks* (ענה ואמר) to Daniel (5:13) and reports what he has *heard* (שמע) about Daniel (5:13, 16). As a court contest, this tale may be read and analyzed under the rubrics employed in our reading of Daniel 2: challenge and riposte, honor achieved in the face of difficult odds, honor enhanced by comparison with others (see above, Chapter Three, esp. 3.1 and 3.2.4). Reflecting on this similar situation in the

context of our reading of Daniel 5, however, we notice additionally that Daniel, like the queen, is in a position to tell the king what to do. The reason for Belshazzar's feast in the first place, from his perspective, is to demonstrate publicly his ability to act, to exercise the royal prerogatives, and yet his order to parade out the Judean temple vessels—as an example of royal action and achievement (although accomplished by his father [cf. Fewell 1988:115–19])—has provoked a response from God which neutralizes Belshazzar's ability to act. Now, in a great reversal, Belshazzar does not give orders; or, the orders he gives prove ineffectual, as when his diviners are unable to provide him with an understanding of the mysterious inscription (5:8, 15), and he loses the authority to command his subordinates—both his nobles, who begin to vacillate (5:9), as well as his own bodily faculties and functions (5:6, 9; see Wolters 1991)! Instead, he receives instruction from the queen (5:10–12), and again from Daniel: "Keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else" (5:17; for another aspect of the social significance of refusing gifts, see Matthews 1999). Belshazzar, by his own actions, has been trying to orchestrate the events of this evening, but now God has interrupted, and Belshazzar's "purposeful action" (*hands-feet*) is thwarted at every turn. Belshazzar is left to be the recipient of action rather than its executor, and one who *sees* and *hears* things but does not *understand* or *speak* aright.

Before Daniel renders an interpretation of the inscription, he "delivers a stinging rebuke to the king in a short sermon, worthy of the ancient prophets (5:18–24)" (Hartman and Di Lella 1978:189). Daniel makes explicit the connection between rightly-ordered eyes-heart and effective power of the hands-feet. He reminds Belshazzar of the power to act that his father Nebuchadnezzar enjoyed, executing his will without exception or, apparently, resistance. "All peoples, nations, and languages were in fear and trembling before him; he killed whomever he wished and spared whomever he wished, he honored whomever he wished and humiliated whomever he wished" (Dan 5:19). Daniel makes clear to Belshazzar, however, that his father had exercised sovereignty only by grant (יהב) of the Most High God (5:18). Daniel thereby reiterates the truth of the world's structure and function as finally recognized by Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth tale: "the Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans and grants it to whomever he wishes" (שליט עליא במלכות אנשא ולמן די יצבא יתננה; 4:14, 22, 29 [4:17, 25, 32 Eng.], see above, 3.1; cf. 5:21). As Belshazzar is now experiencing, however, this ability to act (*hands-feet*) is removed when

the heart and spirit (*eyes-heart*) become elevated and proud—the throne and royal honor are taken away (5:20). Nebuchadnezzar's *heart* became like that of an animal, and his *actions* became those of animals (eating grass like cattle, etc.; 5:21). And now, continues Daniel, Belshazzar has not humbled his *heart* (5:22) but exalted himself. As a result his total person is misaligned, especially the *mouth-ears*: taking in wine—drinking from the temple vessels—and issuing out praise for "the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which cannot see [*eyes-heart*] or hear [*mouth-ears*] or understand [*eyes-heart*]" (5:23). Those gods, which by implication are capable of no purposeful action (*hands-feet*), are not to substitute for "the God in whose power is your life-breath and all your ways" (5:23). This God certainly is capable of action, as demonstrated, according to Daniel's explanation, by the sending of this mysterious hand and the writing of the inscription (5:24).

Consistent with the comparison between Belshazzar's loss of power and ability to act and God's spectacular demonstration of power and action, Daniel's interpretation of the writing understands the inscription's words (מנא, תקל, ופרסין [see 5:25]) to be descriptions of God's latest overriding activity. Commentators have noted that Daniel does not interpret the words as they are written but incorporates related verbal forms into sentences (5:26–28; for a brief review of scholarly interpretation, see Collins 1993:250–52). God is explicitly named as the subject of the first—"God has numbered your kingdom and finished it off" (5:26)—and implied as the subject of the second and third, both rendered in the passive voice—"you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting" (5:27), and "your kingdom has been divided and given to Media and Persia" (5:28). Again, Belshazzar has lost his ability to act; he is instead being acted upon, and the author of this action is the Judean God, who is sovereign over human kingship.

Belshazzar does take one appropriate action in this tale, honoring Daniel with the promised rewards of purple clothing and the golden symbol (Hartman and Di Lella call it a "torque" [1978:183, 184]) of his authority in a new high office (see Collins 1993:247) (5:29). God's action ends the tale, however, as "that very night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed" (5:30) and "Darius the Mede received the kingdom" (6:1 [5:31 Eng.]); again, passive-voice verbs indicate divine action. It is appropriate that Daniel is honored even as the king is dishonored, deposed, and dispatched, for Daniel has demonstrated a proper relationship to God, with the zones that make

up his person properly ordered and aligned with the divine will and sovereignty. Of crucial significance for this proper alignment is, again, the zone of eyes-heart. Daniel 4 and 5 seem to suggest that the function of the other two zones, mouth-ears and hands-feet, depend upon or take their orientation and direction from the eyes-heart. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar lose their accustomed ability to act, and their speech reflects their inability to understand or recognize divine sovereignty when their hearts are exalted with pride in themselves. Daniel, in contrast, models the proper recognition of God's sovereignty and provision throughout the tales (e.g., 1:8; 2:20–23, 28, 30; 6:11 [6:10 Eng.]). Daniel 5 in particular, by its depiction of his ability to read and interpret the mysterious inscription, attests that Daniel's eyes and heart are rightly aligned, because he *sees* and *knows* what others do not.

4 *Summary*

Part of the thesis of this reading is that the tales of Daniel 1–6 sustain a comparison between the Judean tradition and a foreign one. Part of the thesis of this chapter is that the tales of Daniel 4 and 5 are central to the structure of the book of Daniel and therefore of great significance for interpretation. Our social-scientific reading has found that indeed these two tales carry the burden of the theme of comparison. Not only are there several elements that are compared, but the results of the comparisons are directed toward more than one audience. Among the elements compared in these two tales are Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, Belshazzar and Daniel, and God and the two kings. The audiences addressed by the various comparisons include foreign leadership, Judean leadership, and Judeans in subordinate positions.

The comparison between the Judean God and the foreign kings is the vehicle for articulating and confirming the claim that the Judean God holds ultimate sovereignty in the world. God's sovereignty extends even over earthly kings and kingdoms. God's dominion is unending, and by God's power earthly dominion comes to an end. God sets up and deposes earthly kings. Any power that Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar enjoys is power that was given to them by God, who thereby acts as a patron, that is, one who provides goods to a client. The client's role is to give in return gratitude, loyalty, and honor. Failure

to do so is a challenge to the honor of the patron, and Daniel 4 and 5 narrate two different ways in which God responds to the "impiety" of these foreign kings, that is, to their lack of loyalty and refusal to acknowledge God's provision. Nebuchadnezzar is humiliated by the loss of his status and role as king—indeed even his role as a human—until he comes to recognize and acknowledge God's sovereignty. His acknowledgment, in the form of the two doxologies that open and close the fourth tale, provides a positive example of an earthly king's proper relationship to the Most High God. Belshazzar, too, is humiliated by the loss of his royal powers—and, indeed, his basic bodily functions—as a prelude not to the reversal that Nebuchadnezzar enjoyed but to his own death and the loss of his kingdom. Belshazzar's circumstances, therefore, provide a negative example of an earthly king's impiety and its dire consequences. To read that verdict positively, we may say that the fifth tale demonstrates God's sovereignty by narrating God's ability to respond to the challenge of an earthly king and win the game of challenge and riposte. Thus, in the comparison between the Judean God and the foreign kings, God clearly takes the victory and deserves the praise, honor, and loyalty of all those on earth—if from kings, then *a fortiori* from those further down the social ladder.

Daniel 5 features, in addition, a comparison between Belshazzar and Daniel. Analysis of the tale by means of the three-zone model of personality helps focus attention upon the abilities of the two characters to function. Belshazzar, the king, is expected to demonstrate excellence in each of the three zones—eyes-heart, mouth-ears, and hands-feet—as well as coordination and correlation among the three. Indeed, Belshazzar attempts just such a demonstration by hosting a great feast; the event turns out to be the occasion for Belshazzar's humiliation instead. At the banquet, Belshazzar does not properly regulate his mouth and ears, drinking wine from the Judean temple vessels and praising the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Belshazzar thereupon loses his ability to understand and to act, losses which are depicted in a variety of ways. Belshazzar sees a hand writing on the wall, but he cannot read the inscription or understand its meaning. Neither are his diviners able to read it or understand it, indicating the extended loss of Belshazzar's faculties, as even those he commands prove now to be impotent. The text seems to suggest even the humiliating loss of control over Belshazzar's bodily functions, and his audience grows restless. He is left in a posi-

tion where others must operate as his eyes and hands; that is, God *shows* him what he ought to know but does not, the queen *tells* him what he ought to do but has not, and Daniel *tells* him what he ought to have done but did not. Daniel's arrival on the scene makes the comparison between them especially stark. The king, without appropriate understanding, without effective speech, and without any resources for action, remains idle and impotent while Daniel reads the inscription, makes known its meaning, speaks to Belshazzar of his father's example, acknowledges God's sovereignty, and serves as God's agent for the removal of Belshazzar. On an evening designed to redound to the glory and honor of Belshazzar, Daniel is the one who finally stands honored, clothed in purple, adorned with gold, elevated in status to a position of great authority, while Belshazzar is dishonored, deposed, and dispatched. The conclusion to be drawn by the audience is that Daniel's deeds are the ones to be emulated while Belshazzar's are to be avoided.

A similar conclusion is drawn from the comparison across these two tales between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. Their different stories are told for the same purpose: to affirm God's ultimate sovereignty over earthly kings and kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar experience this ultimate sovereignty differently, and each of their experiences can teach the audience something about divine sovereignty without having to experience its effects directly. Nebuchadnezzar's experience is described above as the "positive" example, which on first examination seems hardly a fitting description. What is positive about being "chopped down," as the imagery of the dream suggests, having one's kingship removed, being driven out to live like an animal? The positive lesson to be learned, however, comes from observing the overall movement of Nebuchadnezzar's story, one portion of which is the great humiliation he suffers. Surrounding the telling of this event, which is largely presented as Nebuchadnezzar's own reporting (see Goldingay 1989:82–83), is the doxological recognition of God's sovereignty and ability to establish and depose earthly kings. Indeed, this very acknowledgment of divine sovereignty proves to be the deciding factor in what happens to Nebuchadnezzar: when it is not recognized, royal prerogatives are removed, to be restored only when divine sovereignty is again acknowledged. By including this reversal, this restoration from the humiliation, Nebuchadnezzar serves as a positive model, providing even the very words that others may use to make the same acknowledgment (3:33 [4:3 Eng.]; 4:31–32,

34 [4:34–35, 37 Eng.]). Belshazzar, on the other hand, is the negative example of one who suffers the humiliation but not the reversal. The audience is not left to draw this conclusion on their own, but the text itself makes the comparison explicit by Daniel's use of Nebuchadnezzar as an example by which to rebuke Belshazzar.

Daniel's rebuke, and the comparison on which it depends, can be transposed from its function within the bounds of the text and put to use outside the text, with the tales' audience. In the text, Daniel represents Judean tradition in a conflict with the dominant Babylonian tradition under which he lives. In a second-century reading of the text, the readers participate in a Judean tradition that again finds itself in conflict, now with the dominant Hellenistic tradition under which it lives. The sustained comparison throughout the entire compilation of tales (Dan 1–6) works to demonstrate the superiority of the Judean tradition and thereby encourage fidelity to it and, thus, to the Judean God. The specific comparisons of Daniel 4 and 5 address that message to leadership, both Judean and foreign, as well as to those in subordinate positions.

For the foreign leadership—specifically, Seleucid kings—these tales provide a model for appropriate rule. Daniel 4 and 5 provide a positive example and a negative example, respectively, of earthly kings in relation to the Judean God, who alone enjoys ultimate sovereignty. Seleucid kings, if they wish to retain their kingship, are to behave like Nebuchadnezzar, or better, to learn from his experience, avoid his mistakes, and emulate his acknowledgment of the Most High God. Belshazzar's example serves as a pointed reminder of the fate that awaits those who do not learn from Nebuchadnezzar's example and refuse to acknowledge God's sovereignty.

For the Judean leadership, too—including priests—these tales provide a model for appropriate rule. Daniel's rebuke of Belshazzar can be heard as a rebuke of those priests who abandon their duties to the Judean God in order to attend the Greek gymnastic events. According to 2 Maccabees, "there was such an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways . . . that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar. Despising [καταφρονοῦντες] the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus-throwing, disdaining the honors prized by their ancestors [τὰς μὲν πατρῴους τιμὰς ἐν οὐδενὶ τιθέμενοι]" (2 Macc 4:13–15 NRSV). There are consequences for the refusal to honor the one "in

whose power is your life-breath and all your ways" (Dan 5:23). If a foreign king suffers such humiliations as Belshazzar does, and fares so poorly in the comparison with the Judean Daniel, then surely local Judean leadership will fare no better in its disdain for the Judean tradition and the obligatory acts of worship and acknowledgment. No advantage comes to those who dishonor the Judean God, and no value lies in the entertainments of foreign traditions, neither Babylonian wine nor Greek gymnastics. Leaders within the Judean community who are enticed by the opportunities that Hellenism appears to offer are addressed by the conservators of the ancestral Judean tradition in Daniel's words to Belshazzar. They are reminded of what God has given to their fathers and rebuked for dishonoring the sacred things of God.

Even those in subordinate positions are addressed by these tales. Not only do the kings provide examples of behavior to be emulated or avoided, but Daniel himself again blazes the appropriate trail for Judeans to tread. Not all Judeans who read or heard these tales were in positions of power to affect Seleucid rule or to counter Hellenistic influence. What they find in Daniel, however, is someone who maintains loyalty to God in the midst of foreign hegemony. Speaking the truth to power, Daniel takes his bearings not from the tradition that surrounds him but from the heritage of his ancestors, receiving from God alone what he needs and what is required for the circumstances he faces. Further, these two tales insist that Daniel does not simply survive thereby, but he is enabled to succeed and prosper when God—who has power to affect human rule—takes action against the foreign leadership. Daniel 4 and 5 are tales of success and failure, respectively, and they communicate to second-century Judean readers both a motivation and a model for faithfulness under the difficult circumstances of foreign domination.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

1 *Review*

We began this social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6 from what may seem at first an unlikely place—in West Africa, reading Shakespeare with the Tiv, through the eyes of a Western anthropologist, in the 1960s. Of course, we did not stay there long, but our first move was to the storybook farmyard of a naïve chicken, Minerva Louise. I daresay the second location appeared no more likely a place to begin a reading of Daniel 1–6 than the first. What we observed in both those scenarios, however, is the significant role that *context* plays in understanding—or, better, in "making sense," as Adam puts it (1995a:169–81). Such a claim—that context influences meaning—is hardly a novel notion today, but I submit that it has made its way only slowly into the discipline of biblical studies and, further, that biblical scholars continue to be more likely to repeat the claim than to explain or exploit its significance and function. The thesis of this study depends not upon the notion of context influencing meaning *in general* but upon the specific difference that *cultural context* makes in the way an audience "makes sense" of a text. The critical methodology that allows an interpreter to analyze this cultural context and its effects upon both the text and a reading of the text is social-scientific criticism (see esp. Elliott 1993; Malina 1986b and 2001a).

1.1 *The Value of a Social-Scientific Reading*

The "leaps" we made from West Africa to Minerva Louise to the book of Daniel do not exhaust the transpositions necessary for our task. We have yet to reflect on the significance of the sixth-century BCE literary setting of the tales for the second-century BCE Judean audience that read those tales. Before we undertake that task (see below, §2), let us reflect again on the value of a social-scientific approach for reading these tales and then review the results of the social-scientific reading we have performed.

From all appearances, there exists no shortage of treatments of the social world of Daniel (e.g., Collins 1985; Lacocque 1988; Redditt 1998; Albertz 2001). Much of this work, however, takes the form of "social description" or "social history" (as described by Elliott 1993:18–20; see above, Chapter One, 2.1.2) and serves to do little more than rehearse the *historical* events that provide the context for these tales. Despite their titles, few studies attend to the *social* systems or *cultural* cues operative in the world inhabited by Daniel and the communities that transmitted these tales. Some recent works have made more deliberate use of social theory and models, but on a limited scale (e.g., Smith-Christopher 2001). In this present study, we have striven for genuine analysis, that is, an interpretation that employs explicit models in order to attend to cultural cues and consider how they influence the construction of meaning by a given audience.

The reading presented here has given primary consideration to second-century BCE Judean readers as the audience for the tales of Daniel. The particularities of specific historical events, as recounted by scholars of the period and reviewed below, are not of central importance for this reading, although they undoubtedly influence the interpretive agendas of various readers in very real and concrete ways. Our reading, instead, attends principally to factors that influence readers' interpretation at a higher level of abstraction (see Elliott 1993:55–58, 96). That is, our reading is dependent not upon the specific particularities that are of interest to historians but rather upon the abstract generalities that are of interest to cultural anthropologists and other social scientists. Elliott (1993:47) encourages us to consider the practice of aerial archaeology (one recent example is D. Kennedy 1998), which provides a helpful analogy for this distinction between lower and higher levels of abstraction. As noted by David Kennedy, a contemporary practitioner of aerial archaeology,

> subtle features that might or might not be noticeable on the ground, or that might not be recognized as archeological, often stand out clearly when viewed from the air. . . . [Aerial views] also invite interpretation, for structures can be understood within the layout of whole sites, and those sites within their larger contexts of landscape and resources. (2000:36)

Borrowing Kennedy's language of "resources," we may say that the salient feature of the ancient Mediterranean's cultural landscape, as

surveyed by anthropologists and corroborated by classicists and biblical scholars, is the dominance of honor as a cultural value. This resource, I contend, was drawn upon by ancient readers and transmitters of the tales of Daniel 1–6, and this present "aerial" social-scientific reading of those texts invites interpretation of their features within the larger context of that resource—the dynamic presence of honor as a central cultural value. The work of historians and those involved in social description help us identify the structures and the sites (to continue with the analogy of archaeology), but our primary interest here is with interpretation, making sense of those structures and sites "within their larger contexts of landscape and resources" (D. Kennedy 2000:36).

The interpretation of Daniel 1–6 that we have made by considering the perspective of second-century Judean readers suggests that the cultural value of honor was drawn upon as a resource in making sense of these tales as a literature of resistance to the perceived threat of an imposed cultural hegemony. Such an interpretation should *not* be understood to suggest that in the clash between Judean and foreign traditions the one valued honor while the other did not. The ensuing tension is not between an honor society and a non-honor society (one in which some value other than honor is central) as, for example, is the case when comparing ancient society to modern industrial Western society (see Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:1–8). Rather, that particular distinction exists for present-day interpreters of the book of Daniel, and a social-scientific reading contributes to today's scholarship by making an explicit effort to avoid the anachronism and ethnocentrism that result when that barrier is not hurdled (see Elliott 1993:11; Esler 1994:22). The conflict in the ancient world between Judean tradition and either the Babylonian tradition depicted in the tales of Daniel or the Hellenistic tradition dominant in a second-century reading of those tales took place between various societies *all of which held honor as a central cultural value.* We must therefore seek the source of the tension between these societies elsewhere, and we find it articulated in terms of honor and played out on the field of honor. The significance of the cultural value of honor is not that one society held to it and others did not but that the interaction between societies, just like the interaction between persons within those societies, was a game played out according to the rules of honor. To change metaphors, the significance of the cultural value of honor is that honor served as the currency of exchange in the engagement of one society with another, one person with another.

The distinction between the societies is thus not in their employment of honor or not, but in the specific content of their respective traditions concerning *whose criteria* will be used to grant honor. As an analogy, consider a group of athletes gathered to race at a running track, and suppose that some of them insist on running clockwise while others insist on running counterclockwise. All of them agree that the race should be one mile long, that runners should stay in the lanes marked on the track, and that whoever runs fastest and finishes first will be the winner; they all wear synchronized stopwatches on their wrists and similar shoes and uniforms; they have all put in the required training and have now met at the starting time; yet there remains a major conflict between them, a conflict of basic orientation: in which direction shall they run? So it is with the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Judeans. All agree (not necessarily in a self-conscious, reflective way) that honor is a central cultural value, and from that premise each recognizes sources of honor (both ascribed and achieved), each knows how to symbolize honor (by blood and name) and display honor (on the physical body, replicated in the social body), and each has developed social institutions for negotiating in an honor society (e.g., purity systems, dyadic alliances like patron-client relationships) (compare these allusive comments to the extended exposition of honor in Chapter One, 3.1). All agree that honor is due to those who properly observe their society's expectations, including behavior that maintains boundaries, confirms maps of persons, places, things, and times, and reinforces ties of kinship. Yet there remains a major conflict between different societies with regard to the *specific* orientation of these *general* agreements. In which direction shall they run? That is, *whose* gods deserve praise, *which* set of expectations shall be met, *what* names and kinship lines are recognized and favored with reputation? *Whose* maps of persons, places, things, and times—and *which* ones of those?—are to be respected? The tales of Daniel 1–6 depict just such a clash of cultures, and the tales were read during a time of similar tension between competing traditions.

The thesis of this study declares that a social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6 allows us to appreciate how these tales could have been read as literature of resistance by second-century Judeans. The tales articulate a resistance to the perceived threat of a loss of Judean identity and heritage in the face of an overwhelming and oppressive Hellenistic domination. Resistance is articulated by means of a comparison that is sustained across the collection of tales. Judean heritage, and the honor-laden relationship of patronage between the Judean

people and their God, is compared to the imposed heritage of the foreign oppressors. The oppressors in the text's sixth-century setting are Babylonian, but they are Seleucid for the context's second-century audience. The results of the comparison favor the Judean heritage and therefore provide not only encouragement to but also a model for fidelity to the Judean tradition and its God. Weighed and found wanting (cf. Dan 5:27), the oppressor's tradition fares poorly in the comparison and is therefore to be resisted and rejected.

1.2 *Results of this Social-Scientific Reading*

A review of the previous chapters of this study will allow for a brief presentation of how each tale contributes to the comparison and its function as resistance. In Daniel 1, resistance is explicit in Daniel's rejection of the king's provision of food and wine. The king's attempt to nurture Daniel and his companions is part of a larger program of forced acculturation which includes name changes—symbolizing a shift in kinship loyalties (what Patterson calls "natal alienation" [1982:5–9, 51–62])—as well as a course of education in the king's tradition, specifically, training in the Babylonian divinatory arts. With an understanding of the cultural significance of commensality as both a ceremony for affirming social bonds and a symbolic microcosm of the larger discourse, we find that Daniel's rejection of the king's food entails both resistance to the imposition of a new identity (a new set of social bonds) and rejection of the king's education as well. Daniel rejects the king's provisions and accepts in their place the provisions of God. God provides Daniel with everything necessary to survive his circumstances of exile and foreign domination. Indeed, God provides everything the foreign king desired and had tried to provide himself. God nourishes Daniel without the king's food (this theme is featured again in the story of Bel and the Dragon, which appears at the end of the book of Daniel in the Greek versions, when Daniel is again thrown into a lions' den but is provided with food by the prophet Habakkuk, who is acting under divine orders; see C. Moore 1977:117–49, esp. 140–49). God educates Daniel without the king's training, as Daniel 1:17 declares: "God gave . . . knowledge and proficiency in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel even gained insight into all dreams and visions."

The comparison, too, is explicit in Daniel 1. The terms of the agreement concerning food (1:12–13) call for a testing (נסה), a com-

paring of the appearance of those who eat the king's food with those who do not. The Babylonian official fears that the Judeans will look worse than their counterparts (1:10), but in fact they do not look worse, nor do they merely match the level of their peers, but instead they positively excel beyond those nurtured on the king's food (1:15)! The outcome of the educational testing likewise finds the Judeans—whose abilities and facilities were provided by God, not the king—to be "ten times better" than anyone in the Babylonian tradition (1:20). For second-century Judeans who may be contemplating adherence to Greek ways, whether under the pressure of force or perhaps by the appeal of attraction, Daniel 1 offers a tale of caution. The superior result lies not in the provisions of the foreign king, but in fidelity to the Judean God, who provides all that is desirable—and in far better measure!

The tale in Daniel 2 further emphasizes the excellence achieved by Daniel over his foreign counterparts. Comparisons abound in this chapter, both in the tale of the dream crisis and in the dream itself. The tale's carefully timed unfolding of events heightens the comparison between Daniel and the foreign courtiers. The initial consultation with the king features only the Babylonian diviners (not Daniel), and their inability to function is highlighted even by their own words (2:10–11). In contrast, Daniel has his own audience with the king later, and he satisfies every part of the king's demands by not only relating the contents of the dream (2:31–36) but also declaring its interpretation (2:36–45). These two contrasting encounters with the king constitute another major comparison and another victory for the Judean tradition; but the comparisons do not end there.

The separation of Daniel from the other diviners not only highlights his success in comparison with their failure, but it also allows us to make other comparisons between this representative of Judean heritage and the representatives of the foreign heritage. For example, when the Babylonian diviners are unable to meet the king's challenge, they attempt a verbal riposte that dishonors their patron, the king, by suggesting he is acting foolishly (2:10–11). They hope that the "time" will "change" (2:9) but instead find a decree of death descending upon them. Daniel, on the other hand, honors his patron, the Judean God, by praying for a grant of favor and offering praise when it is received (2:18–23) from the one who indeed holds the power to "change the times" (2:21). Daniel thus demonstrates *righteousness*. Daniel also exhibits *temperance* and *prudence* (2:14) in his response

to the intemperate rage of the king and the indiscretion of both the diviners in their behavior before the king and of the king himself in his making of impossible demands. The tale thus exploits a comparison not only between Daniel and his foreign peers, but indeed between Daniel and the foreign king as well. Both the narrator's voice (2:19) and Daniel's voice (2:27–30) make it known that Daniel's success is due to the provision of the Judean God, just as in the first tale (cf. 1:9, 17).

Comparison is a theme also in the contents of the dream in Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar sees a huge statue comprised of a series of different materials. Ultimately, a "stone cut out without hands" (2:34, 45) destroys and disperses the statue and all its various materials and then grows to fill the entire earth (2:35). The stone has been the subject of nearly endless interpretation, beginning with Daniel's own reading of it as a symbol for the everlasting kingdom of God (2:44–45). In the immediate context of this tale and its work of resistance and comparison, we find that the stone bears a remarkable resemblance to Daniel himself. The stone is "not to be associated with any human achievement" (Smith-Christopher 1996:54), just as Daniel has dissociated himself from the Babylonian education in favor of divine provision. This "divine" stone crushes all other materials, just as Daniel's divinely-given abilities far exceed those of any other courtier. Further, then, the way of the future lies with the stone while the other materials are destroyed and dissipated, just as, suggests the tale, the way of the Judeans' future lies with a life of loyalty to God as modeled by Daniel in these tales. Adherence to Greek ways is to be resisted, for they will not last, but the sovereignty and provision of God will endure.

The comparison depicted in the tales of Daniel 3 and 6 carries the theme a step further and demonstrates the complications that arise with resistance. On the one hand, the text continues to offer explicit comparisons. For example, the servants of the king are consumed as a result of his fiery rage and their proximity to the fiery furnace when they throw the condemned Judeans into it (3:22), but the servants of God are preserved from the king's fiery rage, even in the very midst of the fiery furnace (3:25–28). Likewise, Daniel's rival courtiers feign loyalty to the king in order to bring charges against Daniel, seeking to preserve their own positions while removing him from his (6:5–10 [6:4–9 Eng.]), yet Daniel's loyalty to God (6:11 [6:10 Eng.]) effects a reversal, preserving Daniel and costing his rivals not only their positions but indeed their lives (6:22–25 [6:21–24

Eng.]). Thus the behavior of the Judeans (as loyal clients of God) is demonstrably superior and preferable to the behavior of the foreign courtiers. The tales also feature comparisons between God and the foreign kings. In Daniel 6, King Darius himself desires to deliver (שיזב) Daniel (6:15 [6:14 Eng.]), but he is unable to. The king's impotence serves as a foil for the power of God, who demonstrates and receives praise for the ability to deliver (שיזב; 6:28 [6:27 Eng.]). In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar attempts to orchestrate an occasion for himself to receive praise and honor, but he is challenged by "some Judean men" (3:12) and proves unable to respond effectively, as they are vindicated by the Judean God. This God, instead of the king, receives praise and honor from the audience gathered on this occasion. The king had claimed that his power was greater than any god's: "what god is there who can deliver you from my hand [i.e., my power]?" (3:15). Ultimately, however, the king is powerless to effect the death of the Judeans, and their God demonstrates great power in delivering them. Again the comparisons favor the Judean tradition by demonstrating its advantages for its loyal adherents and by highlighting the superiority of its sovereign, God, over the sovereigns of the foreign traditions, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.

On the other hand, in addition to explicit comparisons, the text also begins to reflect on the implications of the comparison and the difficulties engendered by the clash of competing traditions. In a subtle twist on the theme of comparison, Daniel 3 and 6 feature examples of the *results* of comparison. Now that Daniel and his companions have succeeded in demonstrating their excellence and winning honor (assuming a continuity of reading the tales as a collected compilation and not in isolation), their foreign counterparts turn into rivals as comparison becomes competition and conflict. With the help of Aristotle's description, we recognize that *envy* emerges as "a certain kind of distress at apparent success on the part of one's peers" (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.10.1, from G. Kennedy 1991:158–59; see above, Chapter Four, 2.1). The fact that envy is the motivation for the action of the foreign courtiers against the Judeans in these two tales suggests that the force of the comparison has become all too clear to those who are on its losing end. Observing the envy of Judean success that the *foreign* characters display serves to effect a figure/ground reversal for the Judean reading audience. A change of perspective takes place as the audience perceives the reversal that has occurred—the dominant foreign tradition no longer seems so "dominant,"

because now *they* are envious of *us*! The allure of the new and exotic foreign ways is broken by the recognition that they do not perform favorably in comparison with the Judean tradition. In fact, suggest the tales, the foreigners make the same recognition, and *they envy us*. Adherence to the Judean tradition is not something to be hidden away or covered over, as reflected in the practice of attempting to reverse the physical signs of circumcision (reported in *Ant.* 12.241 and 1 Macc 1:14–15; see Goldstein 1976:199–200; Grabbe 1992: 279–80), but to be openly displayed, as Daniel does when praying at his window (6:11 [6:10 Eng.]).

These tales also speak a pointed word to the realities of the practice of resistance, however (for a present-day counterpart, see Berrigan 1998). Though in one sense the tables have been turned, the foreign tradition nevertheless maintains the advantage of being the dominant legal force, and adherence to Judean tradition may involve violation of the foreign king's law. The examples of Judean defiance in Daniel 3 and 6 resonate with second-century Judeans living under the bans imposed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who forbade several Judean practices, including worship in the temple, observance of Sabbath and festivals, possession of and adherence to books of the Torah, and circumcision (1 Macc 1:41–61 and 2 Macc 6:1–6; see Collins 1993:62–65). The tales do not flinch from the reality that the defiance of such decrees is a life-and-death matter, leading the characters in Daniel to face raging fires and voracious lions and leading second-century Judeans to face their own forms of potential—and often actual—martyrdom: "many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food [cf. Dan 1:8]. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; *and they did die*" (1 Macc 1:62–63 NRSV, emphasis mine; see 2 Macc 6–7 and 4 Macc for examples of martyrdom suffered under Antiochus). The tales of Daniel 3 and 6 provide a rationale for nonetheless remaining firm in resistance and in loyalty to the oppressed Judean tradition. God provides, and God delivers; God acts in ways superior to the foreign tradition, and the foreigners themselves recognize this and are envious. Their envy eventuates in legal circumstances that can mean the very real possibility of death for Judeans who maintain loyalty to their native tradition, but these tales encourage such loyalty by demonstrating the ultimately superior advantages of alliance with the Judean God.

A brief comment is in order concerning the tales' attitude toward

the foreign subjugating kings and kingdoms. It is common to assess the tales as portraying an attitude more sympathetic towards the foreign rulers than the attitude that prevailed under the difficult reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This assessment contributes to theories of dating the tales of Daniel 1–6, which are considered to be earlier than the apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7–12. The latter are taken to refer negatively to events in the reign of Antiochus, while the tales view foreign rulers more benignly (see Collins 1993:51; Hartman and Di Lella 1978:13; Humphreys 1973:221–23). Without denying that such a "benevolent" (Collins 1993:51) understanding of foreign rulers may have been dominant at earlier periods in these tales' history, when employed in different rhetorical situations, a second-century Judean audience would not have found such an understanding to be the only or inescapable conclusion. The fact that the tales preserve mixed clues that point in differing directions is reflected in scholars' attempt to determine which is more dominant or more original. Observe the comments made by Wills (1990:149–50) in regard to Collins's proposal:

> Collins proposes that the redaction of 1–6 as a whole is toward a more negative and condemning view of the king. . . . Collins may very well be right, but the difficulty comes in matching redactional layers of the various legends and discerning the *Tendenz* of any part of the growing corpus. Daniel 4, for instance, in the Dream Interpretation story, moves from a source which condemns Babylon, to a more positive redaction which allows for Nebuchadnezzar's potential to repent. Daniel 5 begins with a totally condemning political oracle against Belshazzar, and this is changed by representing him as friendly toward Daniel.

By positing a second-century Judean audience of readers who have lived under the negative influences of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as this present reading of Daniel 1–6 does, the necessity of deciding this issue loses its force. Instead, the probable perceptions of the audience become the goal of the reading. While not enough is known about the composition, editing, and transmission of the tales to make conclusive decisions, the anthropological models and ancient rhetorical sources adduced in this study to understand the reading audience do allow for conclusions to be drawn concerning *their* attitude toward the kings in these tales.

Bruce Trigger reminds us that "all humans are predisposed to accept what they think is likely to be true on the basis of minimal supporting evidence, but demand next to impossible levels of proof

for propositions that they judge to be extremely distasteful or unreasonable" (1998:21). If, as we suppose, Judean readers are predisposed to view the king negatively, due to the objectionable policy and behavior of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, then the text's indications in this direction will resonate strongly in their reading while any indications of the opposite will be overlooked (not necessarily consciously; see Blount 1995:175–76). How might the portrayal of King Darius in Daniel 6, perhaps the most "favorable" portrayal of all (Humphreys 1973:221), be understood other than positively? Despite his concluding decree and doxology for Daniel's God, the king is more reliant on himself and his own power than he is cognizant of the power of the Judean God. When the accusation against Daniel is initially made, the king "sets his mind on delivering [שיזב]" Daniel himself and "strives to rescue [נצל] him" (6:15 [6:14 Eng.]). Only after the conspirators press the king to carry through with the condemnation does the king entertain the possibility that Daniel's God might deliver Daniel. The king's statement to Daniel is best taken, grammatically, as an affirmation, "Your God . . . will deliver [שיזב] you" (Hartman and Di Lella 1978:195); alternately, some English translations take it as merely an expression of hope, "May your God . . . deliver [שיזב] you" (6:17 [6:16 Eng.] NRSV, NIV). The king's confidence in this God is by no means proven by *these* words. Indeed, the king's continuing unease and concern for Daniel is indicated both by the fasting and restlessness of the night (6:19 [6:18 Eng.]) as well as the early morning rush to the lions' den (6:20 [6:19 Eng.]). There the king inquires, doubtingly, we may suppose: "Has your God . . . been able to deliver [שיזב] you?" (6:21 [6:20 Eng.]). Only the irrefutable evidence of Daniel's intact person is able to convince the king to honor Daniel's God's ability over his own.

Thus, even in this "favorable" portrait of a foreign king, the tale nevertheless functions to compare, negatively, the foreign king with the Judean God. The king attempts to perform the role—and thus arrogate to himself the status—of the patron of the Judeans. The king wishes to be the one—and only—who provides them with food and drink (nurture), training and education (Dan 1), who provides them with rescue and deliverance (Dan 6), and who in turn receives their exclusive loyalty and attention as his clients (Dan 3). The king does not recognize God as Daniel's savior, but rather he himself attempts to be Daniel's deliverer (שיזב) and rescuer (נצל). This is inappropriate, however, not to mention ineffective. The king can do

nothing to deliver Daniel but serves instead only to condemn him. It is none but the Judean God who serves as deliverer. The king, with the benefit of retrospect, correctly perceives God's power and properly honors God with the royal decree and doxology directed toward "the God of Daniel . . . the living God" (6:27 [6:26 Eng.]): ". . . *he* delivers [שיזב] and rescues [נצל] . . ." (6:28 [6:27 Eng.]).

Indeed, God's ultimate sovereignty comes to the fore in the tales of Daniel 4 and 5. Comparison again predominates, and again the level of reflection on the difficult choices of resistance is complicated. Two different comparisons address two different aspects of second-century life under the influence of Hellenism. First, the tales compare the human kings with God. God's sovereignty is not only proclaimed throughout the tales of Daniel 1–6 but also demonstrated in several of their episodes. Here, the extent of that sovereignty is made clear; divine sovereignty is not of the same order as human sovereignty, nor do they share the same stage, as if a choice must be made between the one or the other. Rather, human sovereignty exists only as a derivative of divine sovereignty; human kings receive their kingship from God, and they may have it revoked by God. God's sovereignty extends over all human sovereignty. Earthly kings set themselves up as patrons, as if they can vie with God for clients; such is Nebuchadnezzar's effort to provide nurture for the Judeans in Daniel 1, and such is Darius's effort to deliver Daniel in Daniel 6. In truth, however, human kings are not in a position to *provide* anything except what has *been provided* to them as a grant from God; "the Most High God granted sovereignty, greatness, honor, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar" (Dan 5:18). The royal prerogatives a king enjoys—"he killed whomever he wished and spared whomever he wished, he honored whomever he wished and humiliated whomever he wished" (5:19)—are the same prerogatives that God exercises over the king himself—Daniel reminds Belshazzar that there is a "God in whose power is your life-breath and all your ways" (5:23). The royal prerogatives to humiliate and to kill are now exercised by God over the human kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, respectively, making clear that "the Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans and grants it to whomever he wishes" (4:14, 22, 29 [4:17, 25, 32 Eng.]). From a client's point of view, then, the wise choice is to ally oneself with the ultimate sovereign—i.e., the Judean God—and not any derivative sovereign—whether the king be Babylonian, Median, Persian, or Greek.

Second, the tales compare Nebuchadnezzar with Belshazzar. Here the audience observes two different human kings finding their way under God's ultimate sovereignty. Both cases serve to exemplify the fact that "the Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans" (4:14, 22, 29 [4:17, 25, 32 Eng.]; cf. 5:21). However, Nebuchadnezzar's tale provides a positive example of the success of a king who—eventually—acknowledges God's sovereignty, while Belshazzar's tale provides a negative example of the failure of a king who does not show proper respect and pays with his life. Nebuchadnezzar has his kingdom, his honor and status, even his life as a human, *returned to him* when he acknowledges the Judean God; Belshazzar has his kingdom, his honor and status, even his life, *taken from him* when he fails to acknowledge the Judean God.

In a context of cultural domination that produces resistance, these tales foster a complicated reflection on the options available for resistance and resisters. First, the tales clearly encourage resistance to the foreign tradition as it conflicts with continued loyalty to the Judean God. These foreign kings who hold dominion over the Judeans act only by the allowance of God's will, just as Jerusalem was given into Nebuchadnezzar's hand only by an act of God's will (emphasized by the phrasing of Dan 1:2, see Chapter Two, 3.1). When his policies fail to acknowledge God's sovereignty, a human king will be held accountable and cannot stand when God has weighed and found him wanting, numbered his days and divided his kingdom, and given it to another (Dan 5:25–28). Second, the tales encourage kings and others in leadership to remember God's ultimate sovereignty and to act in accord with it. Just as the envy displayed by the foreigners in Daniel 3 and 6 reveals their recognition that the Judean tradition is superior, so here the success of Nebuchadnezzar and the failure of Belshazzar reveal the advantages of proper relationship to God. As sovereign over the entire human world and not just Judeans, God is willing and able to serve as provider and protector (that is, as patron) for all. Under second-century conditions of foreign rule, these tales speak a word to the foreign leadership, suggesting that the superiority of that which is provided by God is available to them if they will stop competing with God's role as patron. The tales not only demonstrate the benefits of honoring God and the disadvantages of dishonoring God, they also depict a foreign leadership structure (in the form of the envious courtiers) recognizing Judean superiority, and they provide a model (in the form of foreign kings decreeing

doxologies of praise and honor) for forging the proper relationship with God. Faithfulness to God benefits not only Judeans but also those of a different tradition who rule over Judeans.

The word spoken to foreign leadership is spoken also to native leadership. As we will see below (§2), the second century BCE was a complicated period featuring complex relationships between groups of people and various authorities. Included in this varied picture is a period of Judean independence under the Maccabees/Hasmoneans (142–63 BCE). The Maccabean rebels controlled various sections of Judean territory beginning as much as two decades before that period. Prior even to that, there was a limited measure of self-rule allowed by the Seleucids in the form of an authoritative high priesthood. Some form of Judean leadership, therefore—whether the foreign-appointed hierocracy, native military rebels, or independent Judeans—could have profited from the tales of Daniel throughout the second century. On the one hand, the tales encourage resistance to the domination of a foreign tradition, but on the other hand the tales place significant conditions on those who would rule in its place. "The Most High has sovereignty over the kingship of humans and grants it to whomever he wishes" (4:14, 22, 29 [4:17, 25, 32 Eng.]). Such is the reality not only for the great empires that surround and dominate the Judeans but for the Judeans themselves. A native leadership that does not honor God by demonstrating loyalty to the patron-client relationship the people enjoy with their God is just as liable to loss as is a foreign regime. Indeed, the sixth-century setting of the tales of Daniel serves as a constant reminder of the loss of Judean independence in the Babylonian exile, an event that is understood to be God's intention (as in Dan 1:2), using Nebuchadnezzar as an agent of the divine will (see Jer 25:8–9). Thus, the charges leveled against priests in 2 Maccabees 4:13–15, describing the abandonment of their temple service in favor of *gymnasium* activities, highlight a concern with Judean leadership that the book of Daniel addresses with tales of caution and models of loyalty to tradition.

1.3 *Contribution of this Social-scientific Reading*

The claim of this study is that a social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6 makes a valuable contribution to scholarship on the book of Daniel. As stated above (Chapter One, §3), social-scientific criticism works to broaden historical-critical discourse by including an explicit concern

for the role of cultural information alongside the traditional arenas of philology, grammar, and other linguistic phenomena (see Deist 2000:24–28). If indeed sense is not made of *words* but of *wordings* that serve as signs within a *shared cultural context* (see Malina 1996c:3–14), then some understanding of that shared cultural context (i.e., a "symbolic universe" [Neyrey 1991b] or "cognitive world" [Deist 2000: 29–33]) is worth pursuing. The models of social-scientific criticism are the tools that assist us in that pursuit. At this point, it is worth reflecting on the results of this social-scientific reading of Daniel 1–6 and considering the ways in which it contributes to the developing field of scholarship on the book of Daniel. As we would expect from a method that intends not to displace but to broaden and enrich the tradition of historical-critical research, social-scientific criticism results in readings that often corroborate previous findings. This is one of the criteria that help us evaluate its contribution positively. In some cases, social-scientific criticism produces readings that stand in some tension with those produced by other methods, but in other cases a social-scientific reading provides a firmer grounding and greater precision to aspects of a traditional interpretation that stand only as presumptions otherwise. Throughout this study we have engaged with commentators who make intuitive suggestions while social-scientific criticism provides well-grounded arguments, with commentators who offer tentative speculations while social-scientific criticism provides well-supported explanations.

In Daniel 1, for example, social-scientific models provide a sensitivity to cultural cues that helps explain what otherwise appears to be a troublesome oddity. Namely, in a chapter that bears the literary responsibility of introducing readers to the themes and characters of the book of Daniel, why do we find an emphasis on the apparently mundane matter of *food*? Commentators sometimes point to Jewish dietary restrictions as the heart of Daniel's concern not to defile himself (1:8), but they also admit that Daniel's scruples take him farther than Torah regulation requires (e.g., Goldingay 1989:18–19). Attention to the cultural significance of food and commensality, however, especially as it resonates with the Judeans' context of foreign subjugation, reveals a role for this tale of food rejection that is much more significant than a token example of piety in exile and diaspora. The tale of the food rejection is the vehicle for establishing the premise of resistance that pervades the entirety of the book. Further, it indicates a rejection that extends not only to the king's food but to the

king's education and indeed to every royal attempt to usurp God's place as patron and provider for the Judeans.

The perception of God as a patron is itself a unique contribution from social-scientific criticism. The role of kinship not simply as a significant institution in ancient societies but also as the primary model for shared social perceptions of the world's structure is now becoming widely noted. For example, Cross provides perhaps the weightiest but by no means the first voice to recognize kinship as a "social metaphor" for a host of issues, not the least of which is Israel's understanding of covenant (1998:3–21; see Hobbs' concise articulation of this same insight made in response to a traditional understanding of covenant in terms of a political treaty [1997]; see also Lemche 1994). The loyalty that Daniel displays in the tale of Daniel 2 (read there as the exercise of virtue: temperance, prudence, righteousness [see above, Chapter Three, 3.2]) and elsewhere is not taken as some exceptional example of individual piety, as religious practice is often construed by the modern Western world (see Malina 2001a:78). Instead, it participates in the fictive kinship of a patron-client relationship in which is invested not simply individual advantage (and hardly that in Daniel's case—he risks his life!) but indeed the fundamental identity of the Judean people as a whole, of whom Daniel and his companions serve as representatives (cf. Henze 2001:18). The traditional heritage of the Judeans is pitted against that of their foreign oppressors in this tale of court contest. Collins rightly notes that "traditional interpretation of Daniel 2 has been obsessed with the question of eschatology" (1993:174), attending primarily to the content of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. A social-scientific approach helps to sharpen our focus instead on the surrounding tale and the dynamics of comparison between the various characters and, hence, of their respective traditions.

In some cases, the insights of other interpretive approaches are accepted but then interrogated further using the specific questions and perspectives of social-scientific criticism. For example, Goldingay notes with regard to Daniel 2 that "the characterization of the main figures in the story is effected by means of cartooning so as to polarize them" (1989:43). Social-scientific criticism recognizes that polarization and finds, further, that it serves to make the comparison between characters especially stark. Awareness of the sharp distinction being made between the Judeans and the foreign overlords allows, in turn, for a different perception of the material's ability to

model resistance. Thus, we need not agree with Collins when he writes that "Daniel is content to serve the gentile overlords to whom the Most High had given the kingdom" (1993:175). Instead, we are prepared to appreciate Smith-Christopher's argument against such a view (2001). Smith-Christopher contends that dreams are weapons, politicized statements of dissent that announce a world in which the present power structure is turned upside-down. Thus we have yet another comparison which again favors the Judeans and their God: "the emperor's dreams become an arena for the exercise of God's power over the Babylonian monarch, and thus the dream world is contrasted to the 'real' world of Nebuchadnezzar" (2001:289).

The tales of Daniel 3 and 6 are another venue for making the case that this material does not present a "benign" view of the foreign kings who wield power over the Judeans (Smith-Christopher [2001:271–73] traces the dominance of this view back to Humphreys [1973] and forward into the work of Hartman and Di Lella [1978:34; see also 163–64, 200–01], Collins [1993:273], and others). Our social-scientific reading has alerted us to the very real danger faced by the Judeans at the hands of their foreign political counterparts and the unwelcome role played by the kings in these life-and-death dramas. Indeed, neither side of this cultural divide perceives the life situations depicted in Daniel 3 and 6 as "basically satisfactory" (Collins 1993:273). As for the Judeans, their identity as clients of the Judean God is being challenged by the legal maneuvers of the foreign officials who are forcing upon them a choice that carries life-and-death consequences. The Judeans are *not* facing a situation in which they may comfortably divide their loyalties, serving a foreign political lord *and* their native religious lord at the same time. Social-scientific criticism helps us realize, instead, that politics and religion are bound up together in inextricable ways and, further, that loyalties cannot be divided in a world that perceives honor (the commodity represented by loyalty) as a limited good. As for the foreign officials, their deeds reveal the envy that motivates their overtures against the Judean exiles. Their envy, in turn, reveals a perception of threat in this zero-sum game of limited good. Life is not satisfactory for them when these Judean exiles begin to succeed in their competition for honor, for a Judean's gain necessarily entails their own loss.

The discussion of envy is a good example of social-scientific criticism's ability to confirm a commentator's intuitive hunch and then to deal more fully with its ramifications. We noted above (Chapter

Four, 3.1 and 3.2.1) that commentators sometimes mention "envy," "resentment," or "jealousy" when discussing the motivation of the foreign courtiers in their action against the Judeans (e.g., Collins 1993:186, 273). However, without the help of a cultural model by which to understand this phenomenon, commentators are able neither to be precise in their description of it nor thorough in their accounting for its significance. Our social-scientific model has brought precision to the use of the term "envy" by distinguishing it from "jealousy" (see above, Figure 8) and by mapping the operations of each (see Malina and Seeman 1998; Seeman 1998). Situating envy in a broader cultural context allows us to be more thorough, recognizing the role of envy in competitions for honor under perceptions of limited good. Thus, declaring that the foreign courtiers are motivated by envy does not remain as an interesting speculation simply to account for the action in a narrative but instead becomes a crucial insight into the audience's perception of the relative worth of the various characters and their native traditions. The presence of envy makes it difficult to suggest that the Judeans are getting along comfortably in their situation of exile; instead, it alerts us to the agonistic quality of life under foreign domination. The presence of envy allows the narrative to help the audience think about the difference between their native tradition and the imposed foreign one as well as to reflect on what is at stake in choosing between them, remaining loyal to one while rejecting and resisting the other.

Just above, I alluded to the unwelcome role played by the foreign kings. Kings take center stage especially in the tales of Daniel 4 and 5. Like the others, these tales feature comparison, now both between the two kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, as well as between the kings and God. Throughout the compilation (Dan 1–6), we find the foreign kings behaving in ways that are sometimes perceived as threatening and sometimes perceived as "benevolent" (Hartman and Di Lella 1978:200). This social-scientific reading has suggested that the kings' behavior can be read *throughout* as contrary to the interests of the Judean God and the Judean tradition. Sensitivity to the competition underlying every encounter between the foreign and the Judean characters in these tales reveals the serious challenge embodied even in seemingly benevolent overtures. Recall that in the social struggle of challenge and riposte, a challenge may take the form of a positive word or deed (see above, Figure 4), for example, an offer of help. The effort of the kings in these tales to provide nurture for

the Judeans (e.g., Dan 1) or to deliver them from danger (e.g., Dan 6) is read by an honor-sensitive audience as a challenge to the Judeans' existing source of nurture or deliverance—the Judean God. Thus, those elements that lead a modern commentator to presume benevolence on the part of the foreign king are elements that lead an ancient audience to a quite different conclusion. The kings' overtures are an attempt to usurp the role of the Judean God as patron of the Judean people, that is, as their provider and protector. Here, our social-scientific reading corroborates the findings of others who suggest that God's sovereignty is a significant theme in the book of Daniel. Social-scientific criticism broadens and enriches that insight, however, by identifying the cultural cues at work in the text by which God's sovereignty is claimed, defended, and acknowledged. The Judean characters model and thereby encourage the appropriate response of continued loyalty to the Judean God—just as under the difficult and challenging circumstances of sixth-century exile, so too under the difficult and challenging circumstances of second-century foreign subjugation.

2 *Historical Transposition*

Turning our attention to the second century and the depiction of its events in the Maccabean literature raises a further question, however. It is by no means clear just what happened in Judea during the second century BCE. The sources which purport to relate the events of that era do not always agree with one another, and scholars vary widely in their estimations of which—if any!—presents a reliable account. Part of the thesis of this present study holds that the tales of Daniel 1–6 were read by an audience of second-century Judeans who found in its descriptions of life under Babylonian influence a fruitful source for reflection on their own situation of life under Hellenistic influence. A more specific portrait of the latter circumstances is therefore desirable. A brief survey of the scholarly reconstructions of second-century Judean events will provide us an opportunity to comment on the connections and resonances that reading audiences may have found with the tales of Daniel 1–6.

Some well-accepted syntheses of the events of the second century have been articulated (e.g., Harrington 1988; VanderKam 2001:16–31), but debates continue to rage over a host of issues. The extensive diversity of the period is replicated in the diversity among scholarly

treatments, and our own survey will rely on some helpful summaries of the academic debate (e.g., Grabbe 1992). Events that are agreed upon include the accession, in 175 BCE, of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to the throne of the Seleucid kingdom, which by then included the land of Judea; intrigue among claimants to the Judean office of high priest, especially between Jason, who held the office in the years 175–172, and Menelaus, whose it was during 172–162; suppression of traditional Judean practices, including loss of the use of the Jerusalem temple for daily offerings during a period often dated 167–164 (others suggest 168–165; see Grabbe 1991 and 1992:264–66); and an armed revolt, led by the Maccabees, which eventually succeeded in recovering the temple, placing its own people in the office of high priest, and securing a measure of independence from the Seleucids. Debated items include the precise chronology of events surrounding the suppression of Judean practices, the causes of the suppression and the ensuing revolt, and which particular faction within this diverse scene is responsible for producing the book of Daniel in its Hebrew-Aramaic form.

Rather than address this entire complex of disputed views, let us pick our way through, being guided by the needs of our present thesis, asking how different groups might have read and made sense of the tales of Daniel in this era. A similar question is sometimes asked in the hope that a profile can be constructed by which to identify the one group or person in this diverse era who was ultimately responsible for the book (e.g., Grabbe suggests Eupolemus [1 Macc 8:17; 2 Macc 4:11] or "someone very much like him in background, education, and status" [2001:235]). Our approach, however, has focused on the reading audience more than the originating source(s) of the tales and their compilation, so we are free to roam more widely (cf. the similarly broad approach taken by Sweeney [2001]).

The book of Daniel was certainly popular among a variety of quite different groups in the second century, some of whom were opposed to one another. For example, on the one hand, Daniel was popular at Qumran, as this summary from Lester Grabbe indicates.

> Daniel was well known by the community that produced the Qumran scrolls, with eight manuscripts of the book found in three caves (1QDan^{a-b} [DJD 1.150–52]; 4QDan^{a-e} [DJD 16.239–89, pls. XXIX–XXXVIII]; pap6QDan [DJD 3.114–15, pl. XXIII]). Daniel is referred to as a "prophet" in at least one scroll, and several passages are quoted or made the basis of exegetical development. (2001:237)

Grabbe also notes the existence of several Aramaic fragments at Qumran which have been designated "Pseudo-Daniel" (4QpsDan$^{a–c}$ ar; DJD 22.95–164, pls. VII–X) and which may bear witness to an independent Daniel tradition (2001:237). On the other hand, Daniel enjoyed popularity among the Maccabean rebels. In 1 Maccabees 2:49–69, the dying Maccabean patriarch Mattathias offers encouragement to his sons by reminding them of the loyalty to God displayed by great figures of the Judean tradition. Included in his list are the Judean heroes of the tales of Daniel 3 and 6: "Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael believed and were saved from the flame. Daniel, because of his innocence, was delivered from the mouth of the lions" (1 Macc 2:59–60 NRSV). The characters from these tales are here being employed by the Maccabeans to undergird their own resistance and revolutionary efforts. Of course, this is probably better evidence for the use of Daniel by whoever composed the Maccabean literature (near the end of the second century BCE) than for its use by the persons (like Mattathias) depicted therein, but the composers were surely Maccabean supporters not far removed from the events. The text of 1 Maccabees, produced probably within fifty years of the beginning of the revolt (Grabbe 1992:223; cf. Goldstein 1976:63), has been described as "dynastic propaganda" (Harrington 1988:86) because of its role as an apology for the legitimacy of the Maccabean rebellion and the Hasmonean dynasty. "It is now generally accepted that 1 Maccabees was to some extent the official version of the Hasmonean dynasty and thus an account from the Maccabean point of view" (Grabbe 1992:223). Yet the Maccabeans and the residents of Qumran—both of whom read and transmitted traditions about Daniel—quite likely took very different views of the events of the second century. Indeed, among the possible reasons for the Qumran community's withdrawal to the Dead Sea in the first place is a dispute with Maccabean leadership over the office of high priest; the accession of Jonathan the Maccabee to that office in 152 BCE may have put him in conflict with another claimant to the office, one who became known at Qumran as the "Teacher of Righteousness" while Jonathan was dubbed the "Wicked Priest" (VanderKam 1994:100–04; Schäfer 1995:52–53; cf. Grabbe 1992:294).

The rift between the residents of Qumran and the temple leadership was not the only fault line running through second-century Judea. Literature from the era tends to depict conflict as occurring between two parties or over a single issue. For example, the Maccabean lit-

erature describes the era as a struggle between the forces of Hellenism and the defenders of Judaism. We have just seen, however, in the case of the Maccabees and the community at Qumran, that divisions exist among different groups of Judeans who consider themselves defenders of Judaism and opponents of Hellenism. Peter Schäfer describes a situation of conflict among the Jerusalem elite who were united in their efforts to make Jerusalem a *polis*—an action criticized as overly "Hellenizing" by many Judeans (e.g., 1 Macc 1:11–15; 2 Macc 4:7–17)—but divided in their allegiances to the powerful Judean Tobiad or Oniad families and the still-competing Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms (1995:38; cf. Grabbe 1992:277–81). Thus, the "Hellenizers" in Judea are divided among themselves just as the traditional Judeans are.

> It must be kept in mind that a whole complex of dichotomies existed in the time preceding the revolt. There were pro-Seleucid and pro-Ptolemaic factions. There were the Tobiad and Oniad families (although these were actually related through intermarriage). And there were the promoters of Hellenism, in contrast to the rest of the people. These dichotomies do not line up neatly but intertwine in a complicated fashion; for example, there were pro-Ptolemaic Tobiads and pro-Seleucid Tobiads. The pro- versus anti-Hellenists were only a relative matter, because all Judaism by this time was as Hellenized as the rest of the ancient Near East. (Grabbe 1992:247)

Returning to scholarly attempts to identify those responsible for the book of Daniel, we find further divisions. Rainer Albertz places the responsibility with a group of "learned elite" who serve as "apocalyptic teachers, who were instructing the ordinary people in the mysteries of the present and future, so that they could resist all the temptations of the religious crisis and attain righteousness in the Last Judgement" (2001:193; for greater detail of his entire argument, see Albertz's earlier treatment [1994:584–94]). However, Albertz finds evidence in the book of Daniel that a distinction is being made "between at least two different groups of apocalyptic teachers" (2001:193). The two groups are divided over their response to the Maccabean rebellion; on the one hand, "a militant one that legitimized military resistance as ushering in eschatological salvation" (2001:197) joined in coalition with the Maccabees (2001:193–94, 198), while on the other hand "a quietistic one that deligitimized [*sic*] any violent actions and restricted itself to teaching pious steadfastness to the people" (2001: 197–98) therefore refused to participate with the Maccabees. Albertz

identifies the former as the group responsible for the "Animal Apocalypse" of *1 Enoch* 85–90 and the latter as the group responsible for the book of Daniel (2001:194–97). This identification of yet another division within second-century Judean society allows for further refinement to the common claim that the Hasidim mentioned in 1 Maccabees 2:42 are the group responsible for the book of Daniel (e.g., Hartman and Di Lella 1978:43–45). Albertz suggests that the book of Daniel came from "the quietistic wing" of the Hasidim as opposed to "the militant one" (2001:201) (the distinction allows Albertz to answer Collins, who opposes the notion that the Hasidim are responsible for Daniel, citing their military activism; see Collins 1985: 131–37 and 1993:67–69). From Albert Baumgarten we get another distinction, this one employing social-scientific models to identify millennialism and then divide it between the victorious type and the non-victorious type (1997:154–85). The book of Daniel was composed, Baumgarten suggests, by millennialists of the non-victorious type—like Albertz's "quietistic" Hasidim, I submit—but the book was popular among victorious millennialists as well (1997:169–70)—like Albertz's "militant" Hasidim and the Maccabees with whom they allied.

What are we to make of this varied landscape of second-century Judeans? On the one hand, it reminds us that we need not demand historical absolutes from our sources nor from our interpretive hypotheses. Thus, for example, throughout this study I have referred in passing to the description of "Hellenization" presented in 1 and 2 Maccabees, suggesting that the tales of Daniel were found to address such a situation. Our review of historians' depictions of the era, however, raises questions about the simplicity of such a view. For example, is the founding of a *gymnasium* and the suppression of traditional Judean practices to be reduced simply to an onslaught of aggressive Hellenism? In the context of this present reading, however, we need not answer such questions in any absolute way—and fortunately so, for postmodern thought reminds us that we *cannot* answer such questions in an absolute way (see above, Chapter One, 2.1.4; Hens-Piazza 2002). Instead, it is sufficient for our purposes to recognize that *some second-century Judeans apparently did make that reductionistic move*. Though it would be thought improper for a modern historian to accept or propound such a view, insisting instead upon an account of "what really happened" (as Goldstein describes his account [1976:104–74]), it is not at all surprising to find that such a view is accepted and propounded by people who are not acting under the strictures of

modern historicism (examples of the thought of such people can be found every day among the letters to the editor of any local newspaper!). Thus, whether such "really was" their situation or not, some second-century Judeans articulated their perception of the events of their day in terms of a clash of cultures, with traditional Judean practice coming under attack by the foreign ways of Hellenism. Such an articulation is now easily deconstructed by pointing to the substantial evidence that Judeans themselves were already extensively "Hellenized" (see the overview provided by Grabbe 1992:147–70; cf. Collins 2001a), but that "reality" does not change the perception that Hellenism was a foreign and dangerous force (several recent works have begun to address the ancient perceptions of ethnicity, culture, and identity; see Cohen 1990; Friedman 1990; Gruen 2001).

Thus the book of Daniel proves to be popular with Judean audiences as diverse as the Qumran community and the Maccabees, for each one makes sense of its tales in terms of their own understanding of their contemporary context. This is not unlike the interpretive work undertaken by Minerva Louise or the Tiv people of West Africa, who each in their own way work to make sense of things in terms of their own understanding of the world. Historians are often interested in the particulars, the small characteristics that set groups apart from one another. By investigating the differences, scholars have attempted to distinguish the various players in second-century events and to identify the single one responsible for the book of Daniel. Despite those differences, however, some strong similarities are shared across the particular divides, and our social-scientific approach has allowed us to consider those similarities and their influence in terms of the reception of the book of Daniel. By working at a higher level of abstraction, we have sought the larger resources that were drawn upon by all readers of, specifically, the tales of Daniel 1–6.

Taking only the two examples of the Qumran community and the Maccabean military rebels, I would submit that both perceived themselves to be facing a crisis of extreme proportions. Therefore, tales that hearkened back to the paradigmatic example of extreme crisis of Judean history—the Babylonian exile—would be found suitable for contemporary reflection. Further, both groups sensed a potential loss of Judean identity as a result of the imposition of foreign practices (though they undoubtedly differed as to which foreign practices were more dangerous and which Judean practices—and in what form—were more important for preservation). Therefore, tales of Judeans

behaving zealously in defense of Judean practices would be accepted as welcome models. As literature that featured government officials involved in crucial leadership decisions and acting in defiance of foreign kings, the tales of Daniel would appeal to the Maccabees as being pertinent to their own mission. As literature that featured cautionary tales addressed to leadership that had gone astray and had lost its mandate from God, the tales of Daniel would appeal to the Qumran community by articulating a warning to what they perceived as a Judean leadership gone astray and liable to God.

The depictions of second-century events in 1 Maccabees 1:11–15 and 2 Maccabees 4:7–17, therefore, are appropriate descriptors (whether historically accurate or not) for they reveal social perceptions and prejudices that would find resonance in a collection of tales which feature a comparison between native Judean tradition and foreign Babylonian (read: Hellenistic) tradition. To the priest who neglects his sacrificial duties in order to attend the gymnastic games, the tales offer a reminder of the superiority of the Judean tradition over the foreign tradition. That which is prized is available in better measure from the Judean God than through any foreign means. Indeed, the tales depict the envy of foreign leaders who recognize the superiority of the Judean tradition, and they encourage fidelity to the Judean God even when the foreign leadership brings life-threatening pressure to bear on faithful Judeans. Rather than being attracted by the allure of foreign ways or submitting to the demands of foreign coercion, the tales model an alternative, an incomparably better way—the way of resistance. In this reading of Daniel 1–6, we have not relied upon historical reconstructions of specific persons and events and chronologies in order to conclude that those specific persons would have responded to those specific events just as we would today; instead, we have relied upon social-scientific models to help us appreciate what in the text would have resonated with second-century Judeans in general, given what we know of their perceptions of their situation. Thus, whether armed rebellion or quietistic influence was to be preferred, all understood the *challenge* of the situation and sought to behave appropriately, responding in ways deemed necessary to protect *honor* and to pay *honor* to God in a time of *conflict* and *competition*.

3 *Theological Reflection*

My own background and interests predispose me to be interested, finally, in the continuing theological use made of biblical texts by believing communities. Therefore, I conclude with merely a hint of one direction that Christian theologians have taken these tales of Daniel 1–6. From the ancient tradition of Syriac-speaking Christianity, we possess several works of Ephrem (ca. 306–373 CE; for more on Ephrem's biography and significance, see Brock 1992; Mathews and Amar 1994:3–56; McVey 1989:3–28). Some biblical commentaries have been attributed to Ephrem (e.g., on Genesis and on Exodus, translated in Mathews and Amar 1994), but not all of them can be confirmed as authentic, including the commentary on Daniel (Assemanus et al. 1740:5.214–32), which has not been the subject of sufficient study to support the uncritical claims that are sometimes made about it. Ephrem is much better known for his poetry than his prose, however, and was prolific in his production of hymns. Fortunately, if the prose commentary on Daniel that is attributed to Ephrem is not to be considered a reliable source of his views, we do have such a source in Ephrem's *Hymns on Fasting* (abbreviated *Ieiun.*; Syriac text with German translation in Beck 1964; English translation—from which all of the following quotations are drawn—in Anderson, Griffith, and Young forthcoming).

In the course of his poetic exposition of the benefits of fasting, Ephrem surveys the biblical tradition and lifts up a series of examples of biblical characters who practiced, recommended, and benefited from fasting. Ephrem does not, however, consider fasting to be merely a beneficial practice that he wishes to encourage. Rather, fasting participates in a much larger drama of the conflict between the "Holy One" (*Ieiun.* 1.8) and the "Evil One" (*Ieiun.* 1.3). Fasting is a weapon that helps polish our hidden eye, making it clear-sighted and able to avoid the sharp arrows of our enemy and focus our gaze upon the Clear One (*Ieiun.* 1). We become aware of Ephrem's familiarity with the tales of Daniel 1–6 as he makes allusion to their characters and the role those characters play in this larger drama of fasting. For example, "the three young men in Babylon" were refined in the fire and, says Ephrem, "the fasters became beautiful"; Ephrem's conclusion leads to doxology: "Blessed is he who gave us the fast, which purifies the rust of craving from our thoughts" (*Ieiun.* 4.9; cf.

Dan 3). But why does Ephrem refer to Daniel's three Judean companions as "fasters"? The tale of Daniel 3 makes no mention of anyone fasting, and certainly not the three Judeans. The answer to this question provides our first significant key to understanding the sense Ephrem is making of the tales of Daniel 1–6.

The tales of Daniel 1–6 are featured in three of Ephrem's *Hymns on Fasting* (*Ieiun.* 7–9). Ephrem's reflection on the significance of the food rejection in Daniel 1 sets the terms for his understanding of the other episodes in the book of Daniel.

> Daniel and his friends grew fat and fair, / since in Babylon they ate vegetables. / But their young companions greedily ate / the delicacies of that mortal king. / The chief of the Left desired to weigh down / the heart and mind of the Right with wine. / By fasting the youths weaned their mouths / from the royal table.
>
> Those youths so fed, / their hearts grew heavy with teaching. / When they came to the test / they could not come up with the fasters, / having eaten heavily they succumbed in the contest. / For the young fasters quickly overtook them. / Fast and vegetables overcame / the dainties and delicacies of royalty. (*Ieiun.* 7.3–4)

Ephrem uses the theme of fasting to identify a distinction that separates the characters in the tales of Daniel—and, by extension, all of humanity—into two camps: fasters and feasters. From this very first decision faced by Daniel and his friends (Dan 1:8), the Judeans exemplify the fasters while their opponents (whether Babylonian, Greek, or, for Ephrem, metaphysical "Evil," "the Left") epitomize the feasters. Further, and of significance for our present thesis, Ephrem perceives their encounter in terms of competition, testing, and contest—in other words, comparison. Ephrem perceives the comparison at work in the tales of Daniel and recognizes that comparison in an agonistic culture is not a neutral activity but a form of contest, a competition. Ephrem then simplifies and extends that comparison by focusing on fasting *vs.* feasting and reading the macrocosmic struggle between Good and Evil in those terms.

From this premise, Ephrem is prepared to make a number of fascinating observations on the tales of Daniel 1–6. As we have already seen, Ephrem understood Daniel's companions to have joined Daniel in his rejection of the king's food; thus the designation of them as "fasters" (*Ieiun.* 4.9) when commenting upon their role in Daniel 3 stems from their role in Daniel 1, where they "weaned their mouths from the royal table" (*Ieiun.* 7.3). From that initial tale they derive

their identity as fasters, and that characteristic continues to distinguish them throughout the tales. When Ephrem revisits the furnace scene of Daniel 3 in his seventh *Hymn*, he begins with a reminder of the Judeans' identity as fasters.

> There [i.e., in "Babel"] they chose the fast; there they became strong. / Dew ran down upon the fasters in the oven, / who had weaned themselves from wine.
>
> Fire drew near and smelled / the pure flesh of the fasters. / The strong scent of the fasters smote it. / A raging appetite was kept from their bodies. / In the fasters it fasted; in the gluttons it feasted. / It ate those who ate; it spared those who fasted. / Those who ate, it ate; those who fasted, it spared. (*Ieiun.* 7.7–8)

Ephrem contrasts the fasters who survive the fire with the "gluttons" whom the fire "ate"; the latter are the king's men who were killed by the flames as they threw the Judeans into the furnace (Dan 3:22). The reversal celebrated by Ephrem in this hymn extends not only to the people involved but indeed to the very elements of creation, as the fire itself is depicted as honoring the Judeans' fast.

> The blessed young men hated and rejected / the delicacies of the king's table. / Fire did not come near their bodies, / for they did not approach his feasts. / Again and again they hated the meat [لحمٰ (*lḥm'*), rendered "das Brot" by Beck 1964:15, but cf. Arabic] and ate vegetables. / Just as their natures were changed so also the fire / changed its nature. / Instead of those within, it consumed those without. (*Ieiun.* 7.9)

Ephrem's *Hymns on Fasting* reveal a reading of the tales of Daniel 1–6 that corresponds at a number of places with the one presented in this study. Though Ephrem's work comes from a period five hundred years later than the second-century BCE Judean audience envisioned by this social-scientific reading, I contend that the elements which we have identified as influential for the reading presented here were just as influential in Ephrem's world as in second-century Judea. For example, the features of an honor culture, identified at a high level of abstraction, may be assumed not to have changed unless direct evidence is presented to demonstrate such change—the fourth century CE still very much participates in what we have termed "the ancient world." Two additional elements lend further weight to our contention. First, Ephrem is known to have been heavily influenced by Jewish tradition (see Brock 1992:20–21; Mathews and Amar 1994:45). Second, Ephrem lived and wrote in a Semitic milieu, using

a Semitic language—Syriac—which is a dialect of Aramaic (Mathews and Amar 1994:5; see the five phases of Aramaic as developed by Fitzmyer 1979:60–63). Thus, I take the points of connection between Ephrem's reading and my own as a corroboration of the value of a social-scientific approach for apprehending the sense made of an ancient text by ancient readers.

A cursory survey of Ephrem's *Hymns on Fasting* 7–9 reveals at least three major parallels between his reading of Daniel 1–6 and my own. First, as we have already discovered, Ephrem emphasizes the food rejection narrated in Daniel 1 as a pivotal event whose impact is felt throughout the rest of the tales; in other words, it decisively affects the course taken in the interpretation of the other tales. For me, the food rejection involves the first explicit comparison (in the "test" proposed by Daniel [1:12–13]) and thus serves to introduce and establish *comparison* as the central figure operative in the tales. For Ephrem, the food rejection serves as the grounds for distinguishing between fasters and feasters, a distinction that his reading features as the central interpretive key. For both of us, then, the tales serve as a vehicle for a comparison between the Judeans and their foreign counterparts—indeed, competitors.

Second, I have suggested that the food rejection symbolizes a larger rejection involving not simply the king's food but the king's education as well (see above, Chapter Two, 3.2.3). Ephrem draws the same conclusion, but without explicit or self-reflective comment, thus suggesting to me that such a conclusion seemed natural and obvious to him. If that is so, then we have further corroboration and validation of the adequacy of the social-scientific approach, which allows us in our low-context social system to perceive that which was "obvious" to readers who shared a high-context social system (see above, Chapter One, 2.1.3). Ephrem reveals his conclusion by the vocabulary he chooses to describe the value of the fast.

> O blessed fast, how we long to meet it. / It is a house of treasure open to the *discerning* [from the root ܦܪܫ (*prš*)]; / it is a feast of the heart for the *knowing* [from the root ܝܕܥ (*yd*ʿ)]; / it is a food for the mind among the *wise* [from the root ܚܟܡ (*ḥkm*)]. / By means of it the *discerning* [from the root ܦܪܫ (*prš*)] soul triumphs / and the *wise* [from the root ܚܟܡ (*ḥkm*)] spirit, too, who looks to the ancients, / for the fast equips it / with weaponry of the house of Moses and Elijah. (*Ieiun.* 7.1, emphasis mine)

Ephrem's description of the benefits of fasting have nothing to do with hygiene or dietary concerns—indeed he does not mention the

physical aspect of fasting at all. Instead, the fast is equated with discernment, knowledge, and wisdom. Such language resonates with the same equation made in Daniel 1. Recall that the foreign king sought youths who were proficient in all "wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight" (Dan 1:4 NRSV) and that God provided the Judeans with precisely the wisdom, knowledge, and insight (Dan 1:17) that the king desired (see above, Figure 3).

Thus our social-scientific reading alerted us to a further aspect of this equation, one that Ephrem simply assumes and thus reflects without comment. Namely, the text's discussion of food entails not only food but also speech—knowledge, wisdom, and insight—in other words, education. The test that Daniel arranged for the rejection of the king's food was at the same time a test for the rejection of the king's education. Ephrem recognizes that the Judeans resisted the forced acculturation to Babylonian ways by remaining loyal to "the ancients," "the house of Moses and Elijah" (*Ieiun.* 7.1), that is, the Judean ancestral tradition. Their loyalty took the form of a fast—a fast from not only the food but, more significantly, from the teach-ing provided by the king. Ephrem refers to the two interchangeably, as if they are one and the same thing, and makes this association of food with education unmistakably clear when he reports the results of the test.

> Those youths so fed, / *their hearts grew heavy with teaching* [from the root ܝܠܦ (*ylp*)]. / When they came to the test / they could not come up with the fasters, / *having eaten heavily they succumbed in the contest.* / For the young fasters quickly overtook them. / Fast and vegetables overcame / the dainties and delicacies of royalty. (*Ieiun.* 7.4, emphasis mine)

Why were the Judeans found "ten times better" than their foreign competitors "in every matter of wisdom and understanding" (Dan 1:20)? They excelled because they were, in Ephrem's terms, fasters and not feasters; further, they were fasters not only from the royal delicacies but also from the royal teaching. They resisted and rejected the foreign provisions of food *and education* and relied instead on the Judean God, who had provided for their ancestors and who now provided them with everything they needed *both* to appear "better and fatter" (Dan 1:15) than those who partook of the royal diet *and* to perform "ten times better" (Dan 1:20) than those who partook of the royal teaching. Ephrem reiterates the point with regard to the royal wine as well. "Daniel and his friends hated wine; / it imperceptibly troubles the clear-minded. / Intelligence [ܚܘܢܐ (*hwn'*)] abounds in those who do not love it. / The taste of those accustomed

to it is dulled" (*Ieiun.* 7.5). Again, food and drink are used to talk about not simply food and drink but the greater concerns of knowledge and insight, wisdom and "intelligence."

Third, Ephrem identifies *envy* as the motivation for the Judeans' opponents when the comparison becomes competition and conflict. Ephrem describes the Judeans as "cedars" (*Ieiun.* 7.5–6), taking his cue from Ezekiel's depiction of God planting a cedar on the mountain height of Israel (Ezek 17:22–24), imagery which occurs elsewhere in Ezekiel (17:3–10; 31:3–9) and which is featured in Nebuchadnezzar's dream reported in Daniel 4 (see Collins 1993:107, 223–29). Ephrem then reports that "Babel envied [from the root ܚܣܡ (*ḥsm*)] those cedars. . . . It cast them into the fire for burning" (*Ieiun.* 7.7). Elsewhere Ephrem further highlights the dynamics of honor and shame that are evoked by this competition between fasters and feasters.

> The Chaldean art was greatly shamed [from the root ܒܗܬ (*bht*)] / for it did not foresee the slaying of her friends. / She was shamefully reproached [ܐܬܟܣܬ ܘܒܗܬ (*'tksst wbhtt*), taken as hendiadys by Anderson, Griffith, and Young, rendered "überführt und beschämt" by Beck 1964:18] in the time of wrath / because magic did not avail. . . .
>
> The faster read and interpreted / the judgment which was written for the Chaldeans. / On the wall the finger of the Most High wrote it; / in riddles it had inscribed it, requiring interpretation. / Those at table were amazed instantly, when they saw the writing. / They were perplexed at its reading, for they read it but did not understand it. / The greedy and wise were shamed [from the root ܒܗܬ (*bht*)], / for a faster entered, read, and even interpreted. (*Ieiun.* 8.3–4)

Here again Ephrem allows the distinction between feasters and fasters, established in Daniel 1, to pervade his reading of later tales, like that of Belshazzar's feast in Daniel 5. Feasting is explicit, and it explicitly leads to the downfall—indeed the death (*Ieiun.* 8.2)—of Belshazzar. Fasting is not mentioned, but the conflict is clearly present, and Ephrem employs the distinction of feasters and fasters to tease out its significance. Daniel is thus identified as "the faster" (*Ieiun.* 8.4), the one who puts to shame the feasters.

Ephrem's Syriac *Hymns on Fasting* are thus a rich theological reflection on the tales of Daniel 1–6. They demonstrate what postmodern scholars and literary critics have taught us to pay attention to: the influence that cultural values and social systems have on the production of meaning. Social-scientific criticism is continually refining its ability to isolate and analyze this influence, the factors that contribute to

it, and the difference it makes in our reading. Ephrem's reading of Daniel 1–6, I contend, grew out of his intimate understanding of the social dynamics depicted in the texts. This present social-scientific reading of those same tales has employed explicit models for the purpose of approaching a similar understanding. The social dynamics of honor and shame with which we have worked, however, are strange and distant from the contemporary, industrial, Western world, so our understanding is not *intimate* but *proximate*. Just as Ephrem's attention to those social dynamics resulted in a reading of rich theological value for ancient Syriac-speaking Christianity, so too do I hope that our attention to them results in readings that are equally rich for our own theological and other purposes in the very different world we inhabit.

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INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Antiochus IV Epiphanes 28, 46, 53, 63–65, 120, 124, 127, 150, 151–52, 161

challenge and riposte 32–33, 34, 71–73, 76–79, 85–86, 90, 121, 125, 127, 134, 138, 147, 159–60
client. *See* patronage (patron-client relations)
comparison 3, 36, 38–39, 55, 59–61, 62–66, 67, 69, 71, 77, 83–88, 90–91, 92–93, 111, 114–15, 125, 129, 134, 136, 137–41, 145–55, 157–59, 166, 168, 170, 172
courage 36, 50, 79
court conflict 40, 69, 70, 92–95, 110, 115
court contest 40, 67, 69, 70, 71, 92, 125, 134, 157
court legend 69

dominion. *See* sovereignty

encomium 36, 48–51, 54, 55, 59, 73–74, 77–78, 79, 91
envy 33, 37, 39, 92, 95–98, 100–12, 115–16, 126, 149–50, 154, 158–59, 166, 172
Ephrem 167–73

fasting 25, 81, 167–72

Hellenism 3, 30–31, 38, 51, 63–66, 90–91, 115, 124, 140–41, 144–46, 150, 153, 155, 160–66
high-context social system 10–12, 170
honor 3, 25–27, 29–31, 31–38, 38–39, 43, 62–63, 71–75, 76–78, 83–91, 93–100, 101–16, 120–21, 124–41, 144–55, 158–60, 166, 169, 172–73

justice. *See* righteousness/justice

kinship 23–24, 29–30, 33, 43, 49, 52, 53, 54, 65, 75, 82–83, 104, 115, 145, 146, 157

labelling 59, 70, 98–100, 112–16
limited good 32, 37, 71, 89, 90, 97, 103, 106–08, 125–26, 158–59
low-context social system 11, 170

patronage (patron-client relations) 29–30, 37–38, 43, 47–48, 50, 54, 57, 59, 61–66, 67, 74–75, 81–83, 89, 91, 94, 102–04, 110, 114, 116, 128, 137–38, 145, 147, 149, 152–55, 157–58, 160
personality, three-zone model 121–23, 129–37, 138
postmodern thought 4, 12–20, 21–23, 25, 27, 164, 172
prudence/wisdom 36, 50, 78–79, 80, 84, 91, 131, 147, 157
purity 33, 34, 43–46, 128, 130, 145

questions, aggressive 73, 85

resistance 3, 30, 38–39, 40, 51, 63–64, 90, 111, 131, 144–46, 148, 150, 153, 154–55, 156, 158, 159, 162, 163, 166, 171
rhetoric, ancient 9–12, 29, 30, 35–36, 50, 59, 73–74, 77–78, 79–81, 84–85, 95–98, 103, 106
righteousness/justice 36, 50, 52, 63, 75, 79, 80–82, 84, 85–86, 89, 90–91, 105, 108, 111, 112, 147, 157

self-control. *See* temperance/self-control
social maps 33, 43–46, 60, 98, 145
sociolinguistics 20–23, 24
sovereignty 39, 46–48, 60, 88–90, 117, 119–21, 123–28, 129–131, 133–41, 148–49, 153–55, 160

temperance/self-control 36–37, 50, 78–79, 79, 80, 84, 91, 131, 147, 157

virtue. *See* courage; prudence/wisdom; righteousness/justice; temperance/self-control

wisdom. *See* prudence/wisdom

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Adam, A. K. M. 1, 4, 12, 14, 17, 21, 22, 23, 28, 142
Adkins, Arthur W. H. 9
Albertz, Rainer 40, 67, 117, 143, 163, 164
Amar, Joseph P. 167, 169, 170
Anderson, Gary A. 167, 172
Archer, Gleason L. 119
Asano-Tamamoi, Mariko 26
Assemanus, J. S. 167

Bailey, Garrick 24
Baldwin, Joyce G. 42, 76
Baumgarten, Albert I. 164
Beck, Edmund 167, 169, 172
Benjamin, Don C. 12, 24, 27, 54, 132
Berger, Peter L. 1
Berrigan, Daniel 150
Bevan, A. A. 89
Bible and Culture Collective, The 9, 13
Blount, Brian 20, 21, 152
Bohannan, Laura 1, 2, 11, 16, 23
Bourdieu, Pierre 32, 72
Brandes, Stanley 25, 26
Brensinger, Terry L. 103
Brock, Sebastian 167, 169
Bultmann, Rudolf 4
Burnett, Fred W. 12, 13, 15, 17, 22
Butts, James R. 74, 77, 84, 85

Calvin, John 76
Capp, Bernard S. 87
Chance, John K. 26, 27
Charles, R. H. 51, 52
Cohen, Shaye J. D. 165
Collins, John J. 4, 27, 28, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 51, 54, 56, 57, 58, 67, 68, 69, 70, 75, 76, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 89, 92, 100, 101, 102, 103, 109, 112, 113, 117, 118, 119, 126, 127, 131, 133, 136, 143, 150, 151, 157, 158, 159, 164, 165, 172
Cook, Stephen L. 27
Corley, Kathleen E. 44
Cross, Frank Moore 24, 29, 30, 157

Danker, Frederick W. 38
Davies, P. R. 119
Deist, Ferdinand E. 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 31, 156
deSilva, David A. 10
Di Lella, Alexander A. 51, 58, 67, 70, 76, 77, 78, 85, 101, 107, 109, 120, 127, 134, 135, 136, 151, 152, 158, 159, 164
Doran, Robert 64, 69
Douglas, Mary 34, 44
Downing, F. Gerald 27, 34

Eickelman, Dale F. 23, 24, 54
Eisenstadt, S. N. 37
Elliott, John H. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 23, 24, 27, 74, 98, 104, 142, 143, 144
Esler, Philip F. 9, 11, 124, 144

Feeley-Harnik, Gillian 60
Fewell, Danna Nolan 40, 48, 55, 135
Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 170
Flint, Peter W. 4
Foster, George M. 37, 95, 97, 103, 106
Friedman, Jonathan 165

Gammie, John G. 40
Garfinkel, Harold 98
Géradon, Bernard de 121
Gilmore, David D. 8, 25, 26
Ginsberg, Harold Louis 40
Goldingay, John 4, 42, 49, 51, 62, 67, 68, 69, 79, 83, 103, 105, 106, 109, 113, 120, 139, 156, 157
Goldstein, Jonathan A. 63, 150, 162, 164
Gottwald, Norman K. 5, 6, 8, 27
Grabbe, Lester L. 28, 46, 111, 119, 150, 161, 162, 163, 165
Griffith, Sidney 167, 172
Gruen, Erich S. 165

Hagedorn, Anselm C. 33, 95, 96, 97, 98, 106, 109
Hall, Edward T. 10

Halliday, M. A. K. 20, 21, 24
Hanson, K. C. 23, 52, 104
Harrington, Daniel J. 46, 160, 162
Hartman, Louis F. 51, 58, 67, 70, 76, 77, 78, 85, 101, 107, 109, 120, 127, 134, 135, 136, 151, 152, 158, 159, 164
Hens-Piazza, Gina 4, 164
Henze, Matthias 40, 157
Herzfeld, Michael 26, 27
Hobbs, T. R. 29, 47, 157
Holladay, Carl R. 4, 5, 6, 7
Hölscher, Gustav 40
Humphreys, W. Lee 40, 69, 151, 152, 158

Jewett, Robert 9

Kee, H. C. 97
Kennedy, David L. 143, 144
Kennedy, George A. 11, 28, 36, 74, 78, 84, 85, 95, 96, 106, 149
King, Philip J. 24, 29
Kirkpatrick, Shane 73
Klein, Ralph W. 46, 47
Koch, Klaus 40, 48, 62, 111
Kressel, Gideon M. 27
Kuhl, Curt 101

Lacocque, André 105, 107, 109, 127, 143
Laniak, Timothy S. 26, 92
Lemche, Niels Peter 29, 157
Lenglet, P. 117
Lever, A. 26, 34
Litchfield, Randy G. 18, 19, 20
Luckmann, Thomas 1

Malina, Bruce J. 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 71, 72, 74, 75, 83, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 104, 108, 114, 121, 122, 128, 142, 144, 156, 157, 159
Mathews, Edward G., Jr. 167, 169, 170
Matthews, Victor H. 12, 24, 27, 54, 71, 132, 135
McKinlay, Judith E. 45
McNutt, Paula 29
McVann, Mark 121, 122, 130
McVey, Kathleen E. 167
Meillassoux, Claude 49
Milgrom, Jacob 44
Milik, J. T. 127
Miller, Patrick D. 47, 123
Montgomery, James A. 42, 48, 51, 67, 76, 77, 83, 89, 108, 109, 118, 119, 120, 127, 131, 132
Moore, Carey A. 146
Moore, Jerry D. 24, 25
Moxnes, Halvor 9, 37, 38, 43
Murphy, Nancey 18

Nadeau, Ray 36
Neyrey, Jerome H. 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 25, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, 44, 45, 49, 50, 52, 54, 60, 71, 73, 77, 78, 79, 81, 87, 89, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 106, 109, 114, 132, 156
Niditch, Susan 69
Noth, Martin 40

Oakman, Douglas E. 23, 52, 104
Oppenheim, A. Leo 48, 68, 75
Osiek, Carolyn 8

Patte, Daniel 13, 16, 17
Patterson, Orlando 49, 64, 146
Paul, Shalom M. 48
Pedersen, Johannes 73
Peoples, James 24
Perdue, Leo G. 29
Peristiany, J. G. 8, 25, 26, 27
Pfuhl, Erdwin H. 98, 99
Pilch, John J. 1, 12, 16, 25, 34, 77, 121, 126, 128
Pitt-Rivers, Julian 8, 25, 26, 27, 31, 102
Plevnik, Joseph 9, 34, 35
Polak, F. H. 40

Redditt, Paul L. 143
Reese, James M. 121
Robbins, Vernon K. 7
Rohrbaugh, Richard L. 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 89, 95, 96, 97, 98, 104, 108, 121, 144
Roniger, Louis 37
Rowley, Harold H. 40
Russell, D. A. 49, 80, 81

Sacchi, Paolo 46
Sack, Ronald H. 127
Scarry, Elaine 33

Schäfer, Peter 46, 162, 163
Seeman, Chris 95, 96, 97, 103, 159
Segovia, Fernando F. 12, 13, 22
Seow, C. L. 48, 62, 82, 86, 88
Shea, William H. 111
Simkins, Ronald A. 27, 29, 30, 83
Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. 41, 42, 51, 64, 82, 88, 143, 148, 158
Snyder, Graydon F. 92
Sperber, Dan 20
Stager, Lawrence E. 24, 29
Stansell, Gary 9
Stoeke, Janet Morgan 1
Sweeney, Marvin A. 161

Thompson, Henry O. 4
Tomlinson, Richard Allan 64
Toorn, Karel van der 40
Towner, W. Sibley 42, 69, 77, 101, 107, 111, 127
Trigger, Bruce G. 151

Ulrich, Eugene 28

VanderKam, James C. 45, 46, 160, 162

Waltke, Bruce K. 119
Wenthe, Dean O. 109, 110
Whiston, William 97
Whybray, R. N. 46
Wikan, U. 26
Wills, Lawrence M. 69, 70, 71, 92, 109, 110, 151
Wilson, Deirdre 20
Wilson, N. G. 49, 80, 81
Wolters, Al 132, 134, 135

Yamauchi, Edwin M. 111
Young, Robin Darling 167, 172

Ziegler, Joseph 112
Zuntz, G. 60

INDEX OF ANCIENT TEXTS

Genesis 40, 41, 53
1 44
4:1 98
4:3–8 98
11:1–9 41
37–41 69
37:5–11 107
37:11 98, 107
37:18–20 98
39:1–6 70
41 69, 70, 71
41:9–13 70
41:14 70
41:40–44 70

Leviticus 11 44
11:1–2 44
11:3 44

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 122
8:11–20 118
10:17 89
14 45
18:9–14 52

Joshua 7:21 41

Judges 8:4–17 73, 85
8:5 73
8:6 73
8:7 73
8:8 73
8:9 73
8:14–16 73
8:17 73

1 Samuel 18:6–8 98
18:9 98
18:10–11 98
19:11 98

2 Kings 4:34 122

Isaiah 11:11 41
45:23 112

Jeremiah 16:5 82
25:8–9 155

Ezekiel 17:3–10 172
17:22–24 172
31:3–9 172

Hosea 2:21 [2:19 Eng.] 82

Zechariah 5:11 41
7:9 82

Psalm 24 130
24:1–6 130
40:12 [40:11 Eng.] 82
77:9 82
103:4 82
111:10 52
136:2–3 89–90

Proverbs 49
9:1–6 45, 60

Esther 40, 92

Daniel 1–3 110
1 70, 71, 88, 90, 104, 109, 117, 123, 146, 152, 153, 156, 160, 168, 170, 171, 172
1:1–7 40–41, 43, 46
1:1–2 40, 47, 123
1:1 67
1:2 40–41, 154, 155
1:3–7 41, 48
1:3–4 48
1:3 49, 83
1:4 41, 46, 48, 49, 50, 64, 65, 171

Daniel
1:5 41, 49, 53
1:6–7 54
1:6 41, 83
1:7 41, 49, 64
1:8–16 40, 42–43, 43, 55, 59
1:8 103, 131, 137, 150, 156, 168
1:9 75, 82, 83, 148
1:10 61, 82, 83, 147
1:11–16 61
1:11 42
1:12–13 146, 170
1:12 65
1:13 65
1:14 83
1:15 61, 147, 171
1:16 131
1:17–21 40, 41–42, 43, 61
1:17 41, 56, 62, 65, 83, 146, 148, 171
1:19 61, 83
1:20 41, 56, 62, 65, 147, 171
1:21 42
2–7 117
2 101, 109, 117, 118, 123, 125, 134, 147, 157
2:1–30 67
2:1–13 75
2:1 67
2:2–12 70, 71
2:2–11 70
2:2 56, 58, 68, 75
2:3 75
2:4 56, 75, 76
2:5 56, 76
2:6 76
2:7 77
2:8–9 88
2:8 76
2:9 76, 77, 88, 134, 147
2:10–11 78, 84, 105, 147
2:10 56, 77, 78
2:11 77, 78, 83, 84, 88
2:12 58, 68, 78, 79, 84
2:13 56, 58, 68, 78, 82
2:14–30 78
2:14 78, 79, 80, 84, 131, 147
2:15–16 58
2:15 84
2:17–18 84
2:18–23 84, 147
2:18 75, 81, 82
2:19 66, 68, 75, 77, 81, 148
2:20–23 75, 81, 82, 137
2:20 74, 81
2:21–23 88
2:21 81, 88, 90, 123, 134, 147
2:22–23 56
2:22 81
2:23 30, 39, 41, 59, 77, 81, 82, 83, 84
2:24–25 71
2:24 58, 85, 105
2:25 69, 70, 84, 85
2:26 85
2:27–30 68, 75, 88, 148
2:27 56, 58
2:28 41, 56, 58, 74, 77, 137
2:29 58, 90
2:30 56, 58, 74, 137
2:31–45 68, 81, 86
2:31–36 68, 147
2:31 87, 134
2:34 87, 88, 91, 148
2:35 123, 148
2:36–45 68, 147
2:37 124
2:44–45 148
2:44 88, 123
2:45 56, 87, 88, 91, 148
2:46–49 67, 68, 85, 86, 88
2:46–47 89
2:46 89, 102
2:47 41, 56, 89, 90
2:48 56, 89
2:49 69, 86, 89
3 41, 70, 97, 98, 104, 105, 107, 109, 114, 117, 120, 121, 126, 129, 131, 148, 150, 152, 154, 158, 162, 168, 169
3:1–7 93, 101
3:2 102
3:3 102
3:5 102
3:6 93
3:7 102
3:8–12 93, 100

Daniel
3:8 56
3:10 102, 112, 131
3:12 93, 101, 103, 104, 110, 112, 131, 149
3:13–15 93, 103
3:13 103
3:15 93, 102, 149
3:16–18 93
3:17 46, 104
3:18 104
3:19–23 93, 103
3:19 103
3:22 103, 148, 169
3:23 103
3:24–27 93
3:24 93
3:25–28 148
3:25 93
3:26 93
3:27 93, 102, 105
3:28 94, 104, 105
3:29 94, 105, 112, 131
3:30 94
3:31–33 [4:1–3 Eng.] 118, 123, 131
3:32 [4:2 Eng.] 118
3:33 [4:3 Eng.] 118, 123, 139
4–6 109, 110, 118
4 90, 109, 117, 120, 130, 151, 153, 159, 172
4:1–15 [4:4–18 Eng.] 118
4:3–4 [4:6–7 Eng.] 125
4:3 [4:6 Eng.] 57, 112, 118, 131
4:4 [4:7 Eng.] 56, 57, 118
4:5–6 [4:8–9 Eng.] 50
4:5 [4:8 Eng.] 54, 57, 118, 125
4:6 [4:9 Eng.] 56, 57, 58, 118, 125, 134
4:7–9 [4:10–12 Eng.] 118
4:10–12 [4:13–15 Eng.] 118–19
4:10 [4:13 Eng.] 128
4:13–14 [4:16–17 Eng.] 119
4:14 [4:17 Eng.] 90, 126, 128, 135, 153, 154, 155
4:15 [4:18 Eng.] 50, 56, 125
4:16–24 [4:19–27 Eng.] 119
4:17–19 [4:20–22 Eng.] 119
4:20–22 [4:23–25 Eng.] 119
4:20 [4:23 Eng.] 128
4:21 [4:24 Eng.] 90, 128
4:22–23 [4:25–26 Eng.] 119
4:22 [4:25 Eng.] 126, 128, 135, 153, 154, 155
4:23 [4:26 Eng.] 126
4:25 [4:28 Eng.] 119
4:26–27 [4:29–30 Eng.] 119
4:27–28 [4:30–31 Eng.] 131
4:27 [4:30 Eng.] 127, 128
4:28–30 [4:31–33 Eng.] 119
4:28 [4:31 Eng.] 128
4:29 [4:32 Eng.] 90, 126, 128, 135, 153, 154, 155
4:30 [4:33 Eng.] 128
4:31–34 [4:34–37 Eng.] 119
4:31–32 [4:34–35 Eng.] 121, 127, 139–40
4:31 [4:34 Eng.] 39, 128, 134
4:33 [4:36 Eng.] 128, 134
4:34 [4:37 Eng.] 39, 127, 128, 131, 139–40
5 109, 117, 138, 151, 153, 159, 172
5:1–4 120, 131, 133
5:1–3 120
5:1 129
5:2 119, 129, 131
5:3 129
5:4 129
5:5–9 120
5:5 120, 132, 133
5:6 87, 132, 133, 134, 135
5:7 56, 120, 132
5:8 56, 120, 132, 134, 135
5:9 87, 132, 134, 135
5:10–12 120, 134, 135
5:10 87, 133, 134
5:11–12 133

Daniel
5:11 50, 56, 119, 125, 134
5:12 56, 134
5:13–16 120
5:13 119, 134
5:14 50, 56, 125
5:15 56, 135
5:16 56, 134
5:17–28 120
5:17 135
5:18–24 135
5:18–21 120, 133
5:18 119, 124, 135, 153
5:19 82, 124, 135, 153
5:20 136
5:21 135, 136, 154
5:22–23 120
5:22 119, 136
5:23 39, 130, 136, 141, 153
5:24–28 120
5:24 136
5:25–28 154
5:25 136
5:26–28 136
5:26 136
5:27 3, 38, 136, 146
5:28 119, 136
5:29 120, 136
5:30–6:1 [5:30–31 Eng.] 118
5:30 120, 136
6 70, 98, 100, 103, 109, 114, 117, 121, 126, 127, 131, 148, 150, 152, 153, 154, 158, 160, 162
6:1 [5:31 Eng.] 119, 120, 136
6:2–3 [6:1–2 Eng.] 94, 106
6:4–5 [6:3–4 Eng.] 106
6:4 [6:3 Eng.] 94, 107, 125
6:5–10 [6:4–9 Eng.] 94, 148
6:5 [6:4 Eng.] 107
6:6 [6:5 Eng.] 107, 108
6:7–10 [6:6–9 Eng.] 108
6:7 [6:6 Eng.] 108, 109
6:8 [6:7 Eng.] 112
6:9–10 [6:8–9 Eng.] 113
6:9 [6:8 Eng.] 108
6:11 [6:10 Eng.] 94, 137, 148, 150
6:11–12 [6:10–11 Eng.] 108
6:12–16 [6:11–15 Eng.] 94
6:12 [6:11 Eng.] 108, 109
6:13–14 [6:12–13 Eng.] 108
6:13 [6:12 Eng.] 108, 113
6:14 [6:13 Eng.] 70, 110, 112, 113, 131
6:15–17 [6:14–16 Eng.] 113
6:15 [6:14 Eng.] 94, 149, 152
6:16 [6:15 Eng.] 108, 109, 113
6:17–19 [6:16–18 Eng.] 94
6:17 [6:16 Eng.] 94, 113, 115, 152
6:19 [6:18 Eng.] 152
6:20–25 [6:19–24 Eng.] 94
6:20 [6:19 Eng.] 152
6:21 [6:20 Eng.] 115, 152
6:22–25 [6:21–24 Eng.] 148–49
6:23 [6:22 Eng.] 114
6:24 [6:23 Eng.] 115
6:25 [6:24 Eng.] 95, 115
6:26–28 [6:25–27 Eng.] 95
6:26–27 [6:25–26 Eng.] 112
6:27–28 [6:26–27 Eng.] 123
6:27 [6:26 Eng.] 131, 153
6:28 [6:27 Eng.] 116, 118, 149, 153
6:29 [6:28 Eng.] 42, 95
7–12 42, 151
7 67, 69, 117, 124
7:20 87
7:28 87
8–12 117

Ezra 4:10 77

Matthew 6:24 108
14:3–12 113

Mark 3:2 108, 109
6:7–29 113

Luke 6:7 108
16:13 108

John 3:30 89

Acts 10–11 60
10:15 60
10:28 60
10:34 60

Romans 14:11 112

Philippians 2:10–11 112

Bel and the Dragon 92, 146

1 Maccabees 162, 164
1:11–15 30, 51, 163, 166
1:14–15 150
1:41–61 150
1:62–64 51
1:62–63 90, 150
2:42 164
2:49–69 162
2:59–60 162
8:17 161

2 Maccabees 164
4–5 124
4:7–17 30, 51, 163, 166
4:11–12 63
4:11 161
4:13–15 63, 65, 140, 155
6–7 150
6:1–6 150
6:18–31 51

4 Maccabees 150

Ahiqar 40, 92

1 Enoch 85–90 164

Letter of Aristeas 60

Testament of Simeon 3.2–3 97

1QDan[a] 161
1QDan[b] 161

4QDan[a] 28, 56, 58, 87, 161
4QDan[b] 28, 161
4QDan[c] 28, 161
4QDan[d] 161
4QDan[e] 161

4QPrNab ar 127

4QpsDan[a] ar 162
4QpsDan[b] ar 162
4QpsDan[c] ar 162

pap6QDan 161

Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 36, 74
1.3 10
1.5.4 49–50
1.5.10–14 50
1.5.17 37
1.9 10
1.9.19 85, 86
1.9.24 103
1.9.38 74
1.9.39 74
2.7.2 85
2.10.1 95, 96, 97, 106, 149
2.11 96
2.11.1 95
2.16.1 101

Aristotle, *Virt. vit.* 2.2 79
2.5 79
3.2 79
4.1–2 80
4.3 79
5.1 79

Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.8.17 106

Ephrem, *Ieiun.* 1 167
1.3 167
1.8 167
4.9 167, 168
7–9 168, 170
7.1 170, 171
7.3–4 168
7.3 168
7.4 171
7.5–6 172
7.5 171–72
7.7–8 169
7.7 172
7.9 169
8.2 172
8.3–4 172
8.4 172

Herodotus, *Hist.* 5.92 125

Josephus, *Ant.* 10.195 76
10.198 76
10.212 100
12.241 150

Josephus, *J.W.* 1.67 97

Josephus, *Life* 122 97

Livy 1.54.6–10 125

Menander Rhetor 1.361.17–25 81
2.371.17–372.2 49
2.376.15–20 80
2.376.20–23 80
2.415.28–29 80

Plutarch, *Garr.* 518C 106

Plutarch, *Inv. od.* 537A 106

Progymnasmata of Aphthonius 36

Progymnasmata of Aelius Theon 36, 74, 77–78, 84, 85

Progymnasmata of Hermogenes 36